YouTube Master Checklist:

Long-Form & Shorts

1. Before You Ever Upload (File Prep & Asset Design)

The work starts before you open the YouTube Studio dashboard.

- **Export Settings Matter:** Export your long-form video file as a high-bitrate **4K or 1440p MP4** file. YouTube compresses video heavily, and uploading in 4K ensures it assigns a better codec, keeping your close-up jewelry bending crystal clear.
- **The Thumbnail "Click Test":** Create a high-contrast thumbnail for your long-form video. Shrink it down to the size of a postage stamp on your screen. If you can't instantly see the spoon ring or the bending tool, redesign it. Keep text to a bold 3–5 words max.
- **Draft Titles & Descriptions Early:** Write out your titles focusing on what people actually search for (e.g., *"How to Make a Spoon Ring"* or *"Spoon Ring Making Tutorial for Beginners"*). Front-load your main keywords into the first few words.

2. The Long-Form Upload Phase (Step-by-Step)

When you click **Create > Upload Video**, configure your settings intentionally:

- **Upload as Unlisted First: Never publish instantly.** Upload the video as "Unlisted" and let it sit for a few hours. This allows YouTube to process the high-definition/4K version and scans it for any copyright flags before the public sees it.
- **Write the "First Two Lines":** In the description box, the first 1–2 lines are what show up in YouTube search results. Use this space to pitch value and link your **$149 Beginner Kit** or your **Amazon Storefront** right away.
- **Add Video Chapters:** In the description, add timestamps (e.g., `0:00 - Introduction`, `1:30 - How to Size the Spoon`). This drastically improves viewer retention and helps Google pull your video directly into search results for specific sub-steps.
- **Set the Category:** Change the category to **"Howto & Style"** or **"Education"** so the system accurately targets makers.
- **Add an End Screen:** During the final 15 seconds of your video, use YouTube's editor to overlay a clickable box directing viewers to *another* one of your tutorials, alongside a subscribe button. This keeps them on your channel.

3. The Shorts Strategy (Discovery Engine)

Shorts are your billboard to pull cold audiences into your world. In 2026, YouTube treats Shorts as premium search results.

- **The Sweet Spot is 30–45 Seconds:** Avoid making ultra-short 15-second clips. The retention math favors 30–45 second Shorts to pass the algorithm's watch time hurdles.
- **Link Back to the Full Video:** When uploading a Short in YouTube Studio, look for the **"Related Video"** setting. You can select your long-form 6.5-minute floating heart tutorial. This places a direct, clickable link right on the Short so viewers can seamlessly jump to the full video.
- **Burn-In Your Own Captions:** Roughly 70-80% of viewers watch Shorts on mute. Having bold, fast-moving on-screen text is mandatory to keep them from swiping away.
- **Perfect the Visual Hook:** The algorithm registers an instant swipe as a massive negative signal. Show the finished gleaming ring or a dramatic metal-bending action within the *first 2 seconds* before transitioning into the process.

4. Playlist Architecture (Keeping Viewers Binging)

Playlists tell the algorithm exactly how your content is grouped and encourages viewers to watch multiple videos in one sitting.

- **Create Intent-Based Playlists:** Don't just make one massive list. Break them down so they behave like courses:
  - *Spoon Ring Tutorials for Beginners*
  - *Advanced Silverware Jewelry Projects*
  - *Tool Walkthroughs & Studio Setup*
- **Add Every New Video to a Playlist:** Make it an iron-clad rule that during the upload process, you check a playlist box.

5. After Posting (The First 48 Hours)

A video's launch relies heavily on early engagement signals.

- **Pin Your First Comment:** Just like on Facebook, pin a comment at the top of the comment section containing a clear, direct call-to-action: *"Want to start bending your own rings? Grab my $149 Beginner Kit here: [Link]"*
- **Reply to Every Comment:** Spend 10–15 minutes the morning after posting replying to the early comments. YouTube rewards "satisfaction and community signals"—conversations in the comments push the video wider.
- **Use the YouTube Community Tab:** You have a Facebook-like feed right on YouTube called the "Community Tab". Drop a photo of your workspace or run a poll (e.g., *"What flatware pattern should I bend next?"*) to keep your channel warm between video drops.

Print this out, run through it for your next upload, and you'll hit every major optimization vector right out of the gate! You've got this.