

# Installing Tailwind CSS 4 on Django

<https://www.djangify.com>

## Introduction

Tailwind CSS 4 brings a streamlined installation process for Django projects. This guide walks you through setting up Tailwind CSS 4 with Django, based on practical implementation across multiple projects. As a Tech VA who specialises in Django development and MVP creation, I've refined this process to be as straightforward as possible.

## Directory Setup

First, create the necessary file structure in your Django project:

1. In your `static` folder, create an `output.css` file
2. Create a `src` folder with an `input.css` file

Your structure should look like this:

```
static/  
├── css/  
│   └── output.css  
└── src/  
    └── input.css
```

## Configure Input CSS

Add the following to your `input.css` file:

```
@import "tailwindcss";
```

That's it! No additional configuration required for Tailwind 4.

## Update Your Base Template

In your `base.html` file, add these lines to the `<head>` section:

```
{% load static %}
<!-- CSS style links -->
<link href="{% static 'css/style.css' %}" rel="stylesheet">
<link href="{% static 'css/output.css' %}" rel="stylesheet">
```

**Important:** Include `{% load static %}` at the very top of your `base.html` file and all template files that use CSS or images. Any file using static files needs this tag at the top, after any `{% extends 'base.html' %}` tag.

## Install Tailwind CSS 4

Install Tailwind CSS according to the official instructions:

```
npm install tailwindcss @tailwindcss/cli
```

## Build Process

### For Development (Local)

During development, use the `watch` command to automatically rebuild CSS when changes are made:

```
npx @tailwindcss/cli -i static/src/input.css -o static/css/output.css --watch
```

### For Production (Deployment)

Before deploying to production, build the optimised version:

```
npm run build
```

**Note:** You only need to upload the `output.css` file to production. Other generated files like `package.json` do not need to be uploaded to your hosting/production site.

## Package.json Configuration

Create a `package.json` file in your project root with the following content (update as needed for your project):

```
{
  "dependencies": {
    "@tailwindcss/cli": "^4.0.12",
    "tailwindcss": "^4.0.12"
  },
  "scripts": {
    "build": "tailwindcss -i static/src/input.css -o static/css/output.css",
    "watch": "tailwindcss -i static/src/input.css -o static/css/output.css --watch"
  },
  "keywords": [
    "django",
    "tailwindcss",
    "web development"
  ],
  "author": "YOUR NAME",
  "license": "ISC",
  "description": "A Django project using Tailwind CSS 4"
}
```

#### Note about package.json fields:

- **keywords:** Only relevant if publishing to npm. Optional for private projects.
- **author:** Documents who created the project. Helpful but not required.
- **license:** Specifies sharing terms. Not necessary for non-distributed projects.
- **description:** Summarises your project. Optional for private use.

## Collecting Static Files

**This step is crucial!** After building your CSS, always run Django's collectstatic command:

```
python3 manage.py collectstatic
```

### Common Issue: Missing CSS

If your site appears unstyled (with no CSS applied), it's often because the collectstatic command wasn't run. This is a frequent oversight even for experienced developers.

## Troubleshooting Tips

1. **CSS not appearing?** Check that you've run collectstatic.
2. **Changes not reflecting?** Ensure the watch command is running during development.
3. **Deployment issues?** Verify you've uploaded the built output.css file.

4. **Browser caching problems?** Try a hard refresh (Ctrl+F5 or Cmd+Shift+R).

## Conclusion

Tailwind CSS 4 is now successfully installed in your Django project. This streamlined process eliminates the need for a configuration file, making it faster to implement than previous versions.

If you need help with Django MVP development or technical assistance setting up your project, I'm here to help! As a Tech VA specialising in MVP development and technical marketing systems, I can guide you through the entire process from concept to launch.

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