LET'S TALK MONEY®

January/February 2019

Time to Tweak Your Portfolio

Are you starting another New Year the same old way as last year? Are you happy with how your investments are performing? Do you know what your investment returns are, or are they on auto pilot? This may be the perfect time to take a fresh look at your holdings and fine-tune where necessary.

Review Your Goals – Investing is a means to an end. Examine what your "ends," or goals, are and see whether your investing choices are helping you move closer to these goals.

Revisit Your Time Horizon – Maybe your child is taking a year off and you have extra time to save for college. Or perhaps you're newly considering an early retirement. To move closer to any financial goal, review the time necessary to achieve it.

Find Your Risk Tolerance – Births, deaths and divorce can alter your plans and change how you view investment risk. Generally, risk is less desirable as goals near and more palatable when you have more time. Work with your financial professional who can factor in your unique requirements.

Keep an Appropriate Investment Mix – Allocate your assets* in a way that meets both your time horizon and risk tolerance.

Learn Something New – For many of us, this means reviewing mutual fund** prospectuses for investments in our 401(k) plans. Read through a fund's prospectus to make sure you understand its strategy and investing approach.

Meet Your Match – If your employer offers to match a portion of your 401(k) plan contributions, make an effort to put in at least what qualifies for the match.

Up the Ante – Depending on your plan's limits, you may want to contribute more. Consider pay raises, bonuses, money from part-time jobs, inheritances and other windfalls as sources of extra money to contribute.

**Asset allocation won't guarantee a profit or ensure against a loss, but may help reduce volatility in your portfolio.*

***You should consider the fund's investment objectives, charges, expenses and risks carefully before you invest. The fund's prospectus, which can be obtained from your financial representative, contains this and other information about the fund. Read the prospectus carefully before you invest or send money. Shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost.*

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I am committed to helping my clients achieve their financial goals for themselves, their families and their businesses by providing them with strategies for asset accumulation, preservation and transfer.

Standard Version

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Financial Fitness: Challenge Yourself

This New Year, legions of people will pledge to overhaul their lives by eating right, exercising regularly, learning new job skills and more. What you don't hear a lot about are people who make the ultimate New Year's resolution — to organize every aspect of their financial lives.

We've organized the steps everyone needs to take to help get their financial lives in peak condition. It's not so hard when you take it one step each month. We are here to help coach you through each monthly challenge.

January – Assess

You might work with a nutritionist to eat better, a trainer to get in shape and a mentor to learn new job skills. Why not work with a financial professional to assess your current financial situation and the work ahead of you?

February – Plan

Write down your short-term goals. Marriage or a first home? And then intermediate goals – maybe a bigger home or a child's college costs. Next, ask yourself what you want to achieve 25 or 30 years from now. A comfortable retirement? Leaving loved ones a financial legacy?

March – Budget

Now figure out a financial path to achieve your goals. Start with a budget. Add your debts and income sources separately. Subtract your debt from income to get disposable income. Then make a budget and stick to it.

April – Reduce

As spring arrives, spring into action by preparing to better your current finances. Cut your debt where possible, particularly high-interest revolving credit. Add to your income, especially if you have a skill that lends itself to part-time work.

May – Save

Put the money you save from reducing debt and earn from side jobs, raises and bonuses into accounts designated for each goal. Never forget that you cannot borrow for retirement, so this long-term savings goal should be a priority.

June – Protect

You don't think twice about protecting the value of your home and car with insurance. Why not do the same for your income? Buy life insurance* to protect your loved ones financially and disability income insurance to protect your earning power in the event a long-term disability prevents you from working.

July – Invest

Put your money where it can help you best meet particular goals. Understand what you invest in. Take advantage of investment options that offer tax benefits.

August – Retire

The steps you take now will influence your financial readiness in retirement. Don't put off saving for this important goal because using time to your advantage may help your money grow. And don't forget to contribute at least whatever your employer matches to your 401(k) plan.

September – Graduate

This will probably come before retirement, but remember that while you can always borrow for a child's college expenses, you can't for your retirement. Use the tax advantages of 529 plans and Coverdell Education Savings Accounts to save specifically for school costs.

October – Enroll

This is the time of year to review and select the benefits your employer offers during open enrollment. Check out life, health and disability insurance offerings, as well as any retirement plan.

November – Give

Contribute to charitable organizations. It feels good and you may get tax advantages for it. Also, you can benefit loved ones with an annual gifting strategy during your lifetime.

December – Review

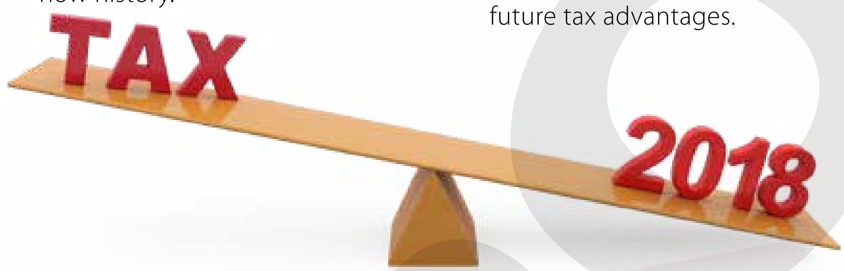
Life happens. For example, your priorities might change and insurance needs generally change with age. Make sure to review your financial strategy regularly with your financial and tax professionals.

** Applications for life insurance are subject to underwriting. No insurance coverage exists unless a policy is issued and the required premium to put it in force is paid.*

Major 2018 Tax Changes

As the New Year begins, tax filing time beckons. This year brings new federal tax regulations, so you'll want to know what deductions and credits are available to you for the 2018 tax year. Consider these tax features:

1. **Lower Rates** – Tax rates are lower and brackets expanded for most taxpayers. Check with your tax professional to learn how this affects you.
2. **Bigger Standard Deduction** – This deduction almost doubled for most taxpayers. If you're married and filing jointly, you will see the standard deduction rise to $24,000. Single taxpayers have a $12,000 standard deduction.
3. **Personal Exemptions Gone** – If you have many dependents, you might miss the personal exemption, which is now history.
4. **Fewer And Lower Deductions** – Taxpayers in high-tax states won't like the state and local tax (SALT) cap of $10,000 on combined local income and property tax deductions. Mortgage interest and the child tax credit are two other areas of change.
5. **Retirement Account Breaks Live On** – It's good news that the deduction for qualified retirement plan contributions and tax-deferral of growth of most retirement accounts continue. IRAs and 401(k) plans are two good ways to find current and future tax advantages.



Debt Can Hurt Your Retirement

How much debt is too much? When it comes to non-mortgage debt, six in 10 workers with non-mortgage debt believe this type of debt will negatively impact saving for retirement. This is according to the 2018 survey *Danger Ahead? The Impact of Debt on Retirement Savings*, which also notes that seven in 10 American workers have non-mortgage debt.

7 Ways to Find More Money to

Ever wish you could find extra money to put toward your child's college expenses or your own retirement? Maybe you would like to take a bucket list vacation or buy a larger home. Whatever your financial goals may be, finding the money to help pursue them can be challenging, but not impossible. Here are some ways to find more money:

1. Eliminate one designer cup of coffee per week. At $3 per cup, you'll save over $150 for the year.
2. Skip one monthly $70 restaurant outing and save more than $800 annually.
3. Clean out your basement or garage and sell unwanted items online, through an app or in a yard sale.
4. Keep your car or SUV an extra year or two. When your car loan payments end, why not save thousands and spend a year or two driving your vehicle without having a car payment.
5. Go through your television and smartphone bills and eliminate paid services and features you don't use. For that matter, you might stream rather than watch TV through more traditional outlets. Save a bunch.
6. Find ways to exercise at home and cancel your gym membership. Save hundreds.
7. Find money in these and countless other ways and establish an emergency fund to ensure surprise expenses don't get in the way of your plans.

Money Market Funds 101

In an investing world that is often exciting and fast-paced, money market funds rarely elicit the same thrill. They can, however, provide a calming element to your portfolio. Here's what you should know about them.

Mistaken Identity

Money market funds* are a pool of short-term securities typically managed by investment company asset managers. Although designed for safety and to preserve their value at $1 per share, these funds do not offer guarantees. This differs from money market accounts, whose principal is typically guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Money market funds have also undergone some change in recent years. When held by institutions, they are no longer required to maintain a stable $1 per share. Additionally, money funds may prevent withdrawals or charge an extra withdrawal fee during very volatile periods.**

Parking Spot

For most individual investors, however, money market funds offer the same features they always have. Often referred to as a "parking spot" for investors who want time to decide where to invest contributions, money market funds can offer relative safety and liquidity, especially when equity and bond markets experience volatility.

The tradeoff is you can typically expect a very low rate of return on your money market fund shares. If that rate is lower than the rate of inflation, you can lose purchasing power. If you're looking for potentially bigger returns without sacrificing a lot of stability, you might want to look at funds offering short-term government debt securities. If you opt for this choice, you should know that even if a fund owns U.S. government-guaranteed securities, the fund itself can't offer the same surety.

Weigh Your Options

As with any investment choice, you should consult a financial professional to learn more about your options. And don't forget to note the effects of taxes and fees when comparing money market mutual funds.

** An investment in a money market fund is not insured or guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other government agency. Although the fund may seek to preserve the value of your investment at $1 per share, it is possible to lose money by investing in the fund.*

*** The Fund's sponsor has no legal obligation to provide financial support to the Fund, and you should not expect that the sponsor will provide financial support to the Fund at any time.*

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FINRA
Financial Industry Regulatory Authority

ADVERTISING REGULATION DEPARTMENT REVIEW LETTER

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The communication submitted appears consistent with applicable standards.

Reviewed by,

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Senior Analyst

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