

My credit rule to live by

A common rule of thumb

“Check your credit report once a year.”

Consumers have told us that they sometimes find common financial rules of thumb—like “check your credit report once a year”—hard to apply to their own circumstances. Don’t feel discouraged, you can decide on your own personal rule to live by that works for your financial situation. You may know that you can get a free credit report from each of the three nationwide credit reporting companies once every 12 months—but did you know that you can request the reports at different times to monitor your credit files throughout the year?

Instructions: Use this worksheet to create your own personal rule to live by that will help you meet your savings goals. Breaking your goals into small actionable steps will keep you from feeling overwhelmed. Writing down your goal will make you much more likely to stick to it.

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About money rules to live by

Just like lane markers on a highway, your money rules to live by are guidelines that keep you moving in the right direction. You might have to speed some things up, slow down others, or change lanes from time to time, but your money rules can help you reach your financial destination.

This worksheet is part of a series that focuses on three common rules to live by that may help you make good financial decisions in your life. The other two worksheets are on spending and saving. To read the research that helped inform this worksheet, and to hear about how other consumers think and

feel about rules of thumb, read “Consumer Voices about Financial Rules to Live By”. Visit consumerfinance.gov/adult-financial-education for these resources.

About the CFPB

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) is a 21st century agency that helps consumer finance markets work by making rules more effective, by consistently and fairly enforcing those rules, and by empowering consumers to take more control over their economic lives.

For more tools and resources on making financial decisions, visit consumerfinance.gov.

My credit rule to live by

Step 1: Create a rule to live by to help you check your credit report

- Choose an easy-to-remember date to check your credit, like your birthday. Or, choose up to 3 dates to check throughout the year.
- Put the date(s) on your calendar ahead of time to remind you to check your credit.
- Write down your date(s) below, sign this worksheet, and keep it where you can see it.

I will check my credit report:

Once a year on this date: _____

or

Throughout the year in the months of: _____

Step 2: Make a promise to yourself—and take action on your rule

I will use my unique rule to live by to help me achieve my credit goal.

(sign here)

Step 3: Take action on your goal

- Get a free copy of your credit report from each of the nationwide credit reporting companies. Visit annualcreditreport.com, call (877) 322-8228, or download and complete the Annual Credit Report Request Form from annualcreditreport.com and mail it to the address on the form.

Tip: Beware of other websites offering free credit reports. Some companies offer free credit reports, but you may have to buy another product or service to get it.

- After you get your credit report, visit consumerfinance.gov/askcfpb and click “Credit reports and scores” to learn more about your credit report, how to fix errors on your report, and more.