

Step on the Credit Score Scale

Understand the power of this three-digit-number

You can get financially healthy by frequently tracking your credit score.

What is a credit score?

A number from 300 (poor) to 850 (excellent) that lets financial institutions know if you're credit worthy.

Why is it important to keep your score healthy?

Dozens of transactions involve a credit score and a strong score means you'll:



Be offered credit when you apply for it (think car or home)



Have the ability to secure contracts for cell phone and utilities



Quality for lower interest rates

Find Your Credit Score

- Use sites like [creditkarma.com](https://www.creditkarma.com) or [creditsesame.com](https://www.creditsesame.com) to find your credit score. Enter your information and within seconds you'll have a credit score. You can sign-up to receive emails when your score fluctuates.
- Everyone is able to receive one free credit report each year. Grab yours at [annualcreditreport.com](https://www.annualcreditreport.com). You'll need to answer several personal questions to get the report so have your records handy. Review your report to ensure open accounts and balances are correct.

Be Smart with Your Credit

- Pay your bills on time. Automate your payments and see if your bank offers advanced payment notification.
- Take steps to lower the balance on your credit card debt. Limit the number of cards with a balance and use just one card if possible.
- Don't open new credit unless necessary. Manage your existing accounts. 15 percent of your score is based on the length of your credit history (see below).
- Instead of moving debt with credit transfers, gradually reduce your debt monthly.
- Always contact your creditors if you're having trouble with monthly payment. They can offer guidance before your credit score suffers.

Understand How Your Score is Calculated

