

# The Beginner's Investing Checklist

Everything You Need To Open Your First Account & Make Your First Investment

*From HustleMovesDaily.com — Real Side Hustles. Real Income. Real Talk.*

*Hey, I'm Jon — founder of Hustle Moves Daily. I work 12-hour shifts in oil and gas, have battled \$20K in credit card debt, and learned investing the hard way (I once cashed out a \$4,000 Roth IRA — big mistake). This checklist is everything I wish I had when I started. Use it. Follow it. And remember: the best time to start investing was yesterday. The second best time is right now.*

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## Understand The Basics Before You Invest

### ■ Learn what a stock is

A stock is a small ownership stake in a company. When the company grows, your stock value grows too.

### ■ Learn what an ETF is

An ETF (Exchange Traded Fund) holds many stocks at once — think of it as a basket of investments that spreads your risk.

### ■ Understand compound interest

Compound interest means your money earns interest on top of interest. Time is your biggest advantage as a young investor.

### ■ Know the difference between investing and trading

Investing = buying and holding long term. Trading = buying and selling frequently. Beginners should invest, not trade.

### ■ Accept that risk is part of investing

All investments carry risk. Never invest money you cannot afford to lose. Start small and learn as you go.

■ **Jon's Tip: I learned most of this the hard way. Spend one week just reading before you buy anything.**

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## Choose The Right Investment Account

### ■ Open a Roth IRA first if you qualify

A Roth IRA lets your money grow TAX FREE. Contribute up to \$7,000/year in 2026. This is the single best account for most millennials.

### ■ Open a regular brokerage account for flexibility

A regular brokerage account has no contribution limits and no restrictions on withdrawals. Great for investing beyond your Roth IRA.

### ■ Choose a beginner friendly platform

Robinhood, Fidelity, and Charles Schwab are all excellent choices for beginners. I personally use Robinhood for its simplicity.

### ■ Verify your identity and link your bank account

You'll need your Social Security number, bank account details, and a government ID to open any investment account.

### ■ Start with as little as \$50

You don't need thousands to start. Most platforms let you buy fractional shares starting at \$1.

■ **Jon's Tip: Don't make my mistake — I cashed out my Roth IRA when I changed jobs. NEVER cash it out. Let it grow.**

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### Make Your First Investment

#### ■ Start with a broad market ETF

VOO (Vanguard S&P; 500) or VTI (Total Stock Market) are the safest starting points. They track the entire market — not just one company.

#### ■ Set up automatic monthly contributions

Even \$25/month adds up dramatically over time. Set it and forget it. Automation is the secret weapon of successful investors.

#### ■ Reinvest your dividends automatically

Turn on DRIP (Dividend Reinvestment Plan) so dividends automatically buy more shares. This supercharges compound growth.

#### ■ Never invest based on social media hype

If you heard about a hot stock on TikTok or Reddit — you're already too late. Stick to your long term strategy.

#### ■ Invest consistently regardless of market conditions

This is called Dollar Cost Averaging (DCA). Buy every month no matter what the market is doing. This reduces your average cost over time.

■ **Jon's Tip: My first investment was \$50 in VOO. Nothing fancy. Just start.**

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## Build Your Long Term Strategy

### ■ Set a clear investing goal

Are you investing for retirement? A house down payment? Financial freedom? Your goal determines your strategy and timeline.

### ■ Determine your risk tolerance

If market drops make you panic sell — you're taking on too much risk. Younger investors can afford more risk because time is on their side.

### ■ Diversify across different sectors

Don't put all your money in one stock or one industry. Spread your investments across tech, healthcare, consumer goods, and more.

### ■ Review your portfolio quarterly not daily

Checking your portfolio every day causes emotional decisions. Review it once every 3 months and rebalance if needed.

### ■ Never stop learning

Read one book or article about investing every month. The more you know the better your decisions will be.

■ **Jon's Tip: Write down your investing goal and put it somewhere visible. It will stop you from making emotional decisions.**

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## Common Beginner Mistakes To Avoid

### ■ Don't try to time the market

Nobody — not even professional investors — can consistently predict market movements. Time IN the market beats timing the market every time.

### ■ Don't put all your money in crypto

Crypto is extremely high risk and highly volatile. If you invest in crypto keep it under 5-10% of your total portfolio.

### ■ Don't cash out your retirement accounts early

Early withdrawal from a Roth IRA or 401k means taxes AND a 10% penalty. I learned this the hard way with my \$4,000 mistake.

### ■ Don't invest your emergency fund

Always keep 3-6 months of expenses in a savings account BEFORE you start investing. Your emergency fund is not for investing.

### ■ Don't compare your portfolio to others

Everyone's financial situation is different. Focus on your own journey and your own goals. Comparison is the thief of progress.

■ **Jon's Tip: I've made several of these mistakes personally. Learn from mine so you don't have to make your own.**

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