



HOW TO PICK A BANK ACCOUNT

For people new to the banking system, finding the right bank account can be a challenge. Banks offer accounts with different features, costs, and requirements.

This checklist can help you make the best decision:

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| 1. Is the account insured by the FDIC? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
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Money in FDIC-insured accounts is guaranteed by the U.S. government up to \$250,000. Plus, all accounts are required to have safeguards to protect against loss from fraud and unauthorized transactions.

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| 2. Does the account have a monthly fee? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| | If yes, how much? \$_____ | |

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| 3. Is there a way to avoid or reduce the monthly fee, such as by keeping a specific amount of money in the account each month? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
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Many banks offer accounts that have low or no monthly fees, if you meet certain requirements. For example, you can avoid or reduce the monthly fee if you maintain a specified amount of money in the account each month, make a certain number of transactions, or have your pay deposited directly into your account on a regular basis.

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| 4. Does the account charge overdraft fees for spending more money than is in the account? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| | If yes, how much? \$_____ | |

One key factor to consider is whether you can be charged a fee if you spend more money than you have in your account. This is called an "overdraft" fee. This can occur when taking money out at an ATM, buying something at a retail store using your debit card, or writing a check.

Some accounts will not let you spend more than you have, so you will not have overdraft fees, and you will not have the ability to write paper checks with these accounts. If you do not have enough money in your account, the transaction will be declined.

There are also accounts that permit transactions to be processed, even though you do not have enough money in your account to cover the full amount. When that occurs, the bank will charge you an overdraft fee (typically around \$35) each time it happens. Banks will need your permission at account opening to charge overdraft fees on electronic transactions (such as using a debit card at a store or withdrawing cash at an ATM).



OTHER FEATURES TO CONSIDER:

Here are some additional questions you may want to consider, as you look for a bank account that works best for you.

5. Will I have to pay a fee to use the bank's ATMs to withdraw cash?	☐ Yes ☐ No
	If yes, how much? \$_____
6. Will the bank charge me a fee if I use another bank's ATM or an ATM in a store to withdraw cash?	☐ Yes ☐ No
	If yes, how much? \$_____
<i>Think about how often you need to use ATMs to withdraw cash and where you can access them. Most banks allow you to get cash from that bank's ATMs without any charge. Some banks may charge if you use ATMs that belong to other banks and ATMs located in stores.</i>	
7. Does the account send out emails or text message alerts that I can use to manage my money?	☐ Yes ☐ No
<i>Many banks will notify you if you are running low of money in your account or if you have any large transactions. These alerts may help you spot any errors in your account and let you know how much you are able to spend.</i>	
8. Does the bank allow me to pay my bills for free by using online bill payments on my phone or on a computer, or to tell the bank to send digital checks or make electronic transfers?	☐ Yes ☐ No
<i>You may be able to pay bills directly from your bank's website or mobile app, and have the bank send the money electronically or mail a check to pay a bill. This bank bill pay feature can save you time, help you stay current on your bills, and keep a record of payments you have made.</i>	
9. Is it important to have a bank branch that is conveniently located (for example, near my home or work)?	☐ Yes ☐ No
10. Does the account have a fee for conducting transactions with a bank teller or talking to a customer service representative?	☐ Yes ☐ No

You should consider what options you would like to use to connect with your bank if you may need help. Some people want the ability to meet in person at a bank branch in their community. Others are comfortable relying on calling customer service on the phone or using online support, such as chats or email.

