

# How to Improve your Credit Score



Improving your credit score will not happen overnight, but with perseverance and dedication, it is possible to bring your score up within a matter of a few months. Managing your credit responsibly over time is the best way to ensure that your credit score remains an asset, not a liability.

## The following tips will help you improve your credit score:

- ✓ Always pay your bills on time. The longer you pay your bills on time, the better your credit score.
- ✓ Delinquent payments and collections can have a negative impact on your credit score.
- ✓ If you have missed any payments, get current and stay current.
- ✓ If you are having trouble making ends meet, contact your creditors or see a legitimate credit counselor.
- ✓ Keep balances low on credit cards and other “revolving credit.” High outstanding debt can affect a credit score.
- ✓ Don't close unused credit cards as a short-term strategy to raise your score.
- ✓ If you have been managing credit for a short time, don't open a lot of new accounts too rapidly.
- ✓ Do your rate shopping for a given loan within a focused period of time. Credit scores distinguish between a search for a single loan and a search for many new credit lines.
- ✓ Re-establish your credit history if you have had problems.
- ✓ Open new accounts responsibly and pay them off on time to raise your credit score in the long term.
- ✓ Checking your own credit report won't affect your score, as long as you order your credit report directly from the credit reporting agency or through an organization authorized to provide credit reports to consumers.
- ✓ Apply for new credit accounts only as needed.
- ✓ In general, making timely payments will raise your credit score.
- ✓ A closed account will still show up on your credit report, and may affect your overall score.
- ✓ Negative but accurate information cannot be removed. You must wait for it to drop off. Some items take longer than others to disappear. For example, a bankruptcy can last years longer than a late credit card payment.

For a free copy of your credit report, visit [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com).  
To dispute inaccurate information, contact the credit bureaus below.

**Experian**  
Consumer Assistance  
PO Box 2104  
Allen, TX 75013-2104

**TransUnion**  
Consumer Relations  
PO Box 390  
Springfield, PA 19064-0390

**Equifax**  
Consumer Relations  
PO Box 105783  
Atlanta, GA 30348

