



Five Financial Tips

When you are getting married

1 Establish ongoing communication about your finances

- Establish a quick monthly meeting in which to go over your monthly spending strategy (i.e., budget).
 - If you and your spouse already have separate budgets, consider combining them if that makes sense.
 - Review expenses for opportunities to save, such as combining cellphone plans and insurance.
 - Determine who is going to manage the day-to-day financial tasks, including the bills.
 - Combine the budget meeting with a fun activity as an incentive to keep it on your calendar.
- Over time, use your monthly conversation to **define your vision** and core values about money.
 - Share your values, beliefs, traditions, and experiences with money. Individuals often have different points of view regarding money, and sharing your experiences can help you better understand your partner's point of view and help you move forward as a team.
 - Identify shared financial goals (such as a house or vacation) that can help you align your budget and investment approach.
- Don't rely on one spouse to manage investments. Co-manage your investment accounts to ensure a shared confidence, vision, and approach.

2 Decide which accounts and assets to combine

Each of you had assets before coming together as a couple. Although everyone's situation and strategy needs will be unique, consider:

- Adding each other to any existing homes, titles, or leases.
 - These arrangements can make transferring ownership of your home—or ability to remain in the residence—easier for a surviving spouse or partner. Make sure to check with your lender before making any changes.
- Create a new joint account or title existing accounts as payable on death/transfer on death, which is like adding your spouse as a beneficiary.

3 Before getting married, determine if a prenuptial agreement is right for your situation

Marriage joins your lives as well as your finances. A prenuptial agreement can protect each spouse's financial interests (as well as interests of any children).

4 Create or update your estate plan

There are a few documents that can make your wishes known and potentially eliminate estate issues for your loved one:

- Advanced directive
- Health care power of attorney (POA)
- Will and/or trust

Also, be sure to update your beneficiaries on all accounts.

An attorney can provide assistance with your estate plan. Once complete, include all of your important documents in one place, and make sure your spouse knows where to find the information when they need it.

5 Review your insurance coverage

- Consolidating automobile and homeowners or renters insurance with one company will likely qualify you for discounts.
- There are additional considerations when it comes to health, life, and disability insurance that you should explore. Take into account what you might already be receiving as a benefit from your employer, and make sure your new spouse is the beneficiary for those policies.

Health insurance

Review the health insurance options that you and your spouse or partner may have through work.

Compare premiums, copays, deductibles, and other expenses—these can vary by employer. Determine if joint coverage under one plan is a better option. Don't wait until your employer's open enrollment period to make a change—you can probably make certain benefit updates outside that period when you get married.

Life and disability insurance

Make sure you have adequate coverage in the event that you (or your partner) die or are unable to work. This is especially important when you take on a large debt, such as a mortgage.

You can often get this type of insurance at reasonable rates through work. Consider supplementing employer-based coverage with term life insurance to cover your mortgage and other debts, as well as to replace your income. You can determine the "term," which is the length of time your policy is in effect. If you die during the term you select, a benefit is paid to your beneficiary.

Disability insurance provides income to help support you and your family if you are unable to work due to illness, incapacity, or injury. Adequate short- and long-term policies are usually very affordable through employer plans. If you're self-employed or your employer does not offer these policies, be sure to find another source of coverage.

Your financial professional can help

A conversation with your financial professional can ensure that you start the financial strategy elements of your marriage on the right track.

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