

Before You Start Investing Checklist

The checks to make before your first trade, from safety cushion to costs, scams and a yearly review.

☐ BEFORE YOU INVEST

1. Build Your Emergency Fund First

MoneySense suggests setting aside at least 3 to 6 months of expenses. Keep money you need soon in cash, not shares.

MoneySense: Planning Guide: www.moneysense.gov.sg/planning-your-finances-well/

☐ BEFORE YOU INVEST

2. Pay Off High-Interest Debt

List your debts by interest rate and clear the highest first. Expensive debt comes before investing.

MoneySense: Managing Debt: www.moneysense.gov.sg/managing-debt-what-can-you-do/

☐ BEFORE YOU INVEST

3. Write Down Your Goal And Time Frame

Note what the money is for, when you may need it and how much you can invest after essentials. A longer time frame gives more time to ride out falls.

MoneySense: Building A Portfolio: www.moneysense.gov.sg/investments/investment-portfolio/

☐ BEFORE YOU INVEST

4. Decide How Much Loss You Can Live With

Every investment can lose some or all of its value. Risk appetite is about how much you can afford to lose, not how much you want to make.

MoneySense: Investment Risk: www.moneysense.gov.sg/investments/investment-risk/

☐ BEFORE YOU OPEN AN ACCOUNT

5. Check The Firm Is Regulated By MAS

Search the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) Financial Institutions Directory. Check the firm is listed and what it is licensed to do.

MAS: Institutions Directory: eservices.mas.gov.sg/fid

☐ BEFORE YOU OPEN AN ACCOUNT

6. Choose A CDP Or Nominee Account

Singapore Exchange (SGX) shares can sit in your own Central Depository (CDP) account. Or your broker can hold them for you in a nominee account. Ask which one you are opening.

MoneySense: Start Trading: www.moneysense.gov.sg/investments/a-step-by-step-guide-to-start-trading/

☐ BEFORE EACH TRADE

7. Add Up Every Trading Cost

Count broker commission and any minimum fee on each buy and sell. SGX adds a 0.0325% clearing fee and a 0.0075% trading fee, plus 9% GST.

MoneySense: Guide To Shares: www.moneysense.gov.sg/investment-s/guide-to-shares-how-to-invest/

☐ BEFORE EACH TRADE

8. Count Currency Costs On Foreign Shares

Buying US shares usually means converting S\$ to US\$. The rate you get is a little worse than the mid-market rate, and you pay that gap again when converting back.

MoneySense: Investment Risk: www.moneysense.gov.sg/investments/investment-risk/

☐ BEFORE YOU INVEST

9. Check Yearly Fund And Platform Fees

Ongoing fees come out every year, in good years and bad. Money taken as fees also stops growing, so small gaps add up over decades.

MoneySense: Fund Fees: www.moneysense.gov.sg/investments/understanding-unit-trusts/

☐ EVERY MONTH

10. Invest A Fixed Sum Regularly

Investing the same amount on a schedule avoids trying to time the market. It does not remove the risk of loss.

MoneySense: Investment Risk: www.moneysense.gov.sg/investments/investment-risk/

☐ EVERY MONTH

11. Spread Your Money Across Many Holdings

Diversifying across different assets lowers the risk of losing everything on one investment. Check your holdings do not all rise and fall together.

MoneySense: Investment Risk: www.moneysense.gov.sg/investments/investment-risk/

☐ BEFORE YOU INVEST

12. Know What Deposit Insurance Does Not Cover

Investment products like shares and unit trusts are not covered by deposit insurance. Only eligible deposits are insured, up to S\$100,000 per depositor per bank.

MoneySense: Deposit Insurance: www.moneysense.gov.sg/understanding-deposit-insurance/

☐ ALWAYS

13. Ignore Hot Tips From Strangers

Pump-and-dump scams hype shares in chat groups and urge you to buy now. The fraudsters then sell, and the price typically collapses.

SPF: Pump And Dump Advisory: www.police.gov.sg/Media-Hub/News/2026/09/20260905_police_advisory_on_pump_and_dump_scams_involving_overseas_listed_companies

☐ AFTER EACH TRADE

14. Keep A Record Of Every Trade

Save contract notes, statements and fee details in one place. They help you check costs and see what you really earned.

MoneySense: Guide To Shares: www.moneysense.gov.sg/investment-s/guide-to-shares-how-to-invest/

☐ EVERY YEAR

15. Review Your Plan Every Year

MoneySense suggests a portfolio review at least once a year, or after a big life change. Recheck your goal, costs and mix.

MoneySense: Portfolio Reviews: www.moneysense.gov.sg/investment-s/what-you-need-to-know-to-take-care-of-your-investment-portfolio/

General information only, not advice. Rules and figures as of 4 Oct 2026. Check MoneySense, MAS and SGX before you decide.

Made by WealthMastery.sg for members. Sources: MoneySense: Basic Financial Planning Guide (updated 29 Sep 2026) · MoneySense: Managing Debt (updated 28 Sep 2026) · MoneySense: Putting Together An Investment Portfolio (updated 29 Sep 2026) · MoneySense: Managing Investment Risk (updated 2 Jul 2026) · MAS: Financial Institutions Directory · MoneySense: A Step-By-Step Guide To Start Trading · MoneySense: Guide To Shares, How To Invest (updated 6 Aug 2026) · MoneySense: Understanding Unit Trusts · MoneySense: Understanding Deposit Insurance · SPF: Police Advisory On Pump And Dump Scams (5 Sep 2026) · MoneySense: Taking Care Of Your Investment Portfolio (updated 28 Sep 2026) · SGX: Trading (Exchange Fees).