

Credit Tip No. 1
Monitor your credit regularly

Make sure you stay on top of your credit history. Be sure to check all three credit bureaus annually.

Credit Tip No. 6
Know your debt-to-income ratio

Lenders look at the amount of debt you have compared to your monthly income — it's good to keep that under 35%.

Credit Tip No. 11
Credit history has a long memory

Bankruptcies and tax liens remain on your credit report for at least 10 years.

Credit Tip No. 16
Don't be late

The first missed payment has the largest impact on a credit score, so don't miss payments. If you are late, don't be 30 days late, and if you have difficulty, call your lender.

Credit Tip No. 21
Length of your history matters

Lenders care about the length of your credit history because they want to see that you can manage credit accounts responsibly over time.

Credit Tip No. 26
Always provide complete information on applications

This helps ensure that you set up your credit history correctly from the beginning and you begin to develop a complete credit file.

Credit Tip No. 2
Know your credit limits

Being close to or maxing out your credit limits may negatively impact your credit score.

Credit Tip No. 7
Start with a college or secured credit card

If you need to establish credit, a secured credit card or a college credit card may be a good way to start.

Credit Tip No. 12
Good scores = Good rates

Better credit scores may get you better credit interest rates.

Credit Tip No. 17
Think before closing accounts

Closing credit card accounts may lower your available credit and could hurt your credit score in the short term.

Credit Tip No. 22
Check your credit score regularly

Checking your own credit does not affect your credit score.

Credit Tip No. 27
Know that others view your credit

Landlords, public utilities, and potential employers may review your credit history, in addition to lenders.

Credit Tip No. 3
Keep balances low

Keep balances low on credit cards and other revolving accounts — this may help your credit score.

Credit Tip No. 8
Pay down highest interest rates first

When trying to pay down your existing debt, pay down your highest-interest debt first.

Credit Tip No. 13
Pay more than the minimum

Paying more than what's due on your credit card helps you pay down debt faster and can improve your credit score.

Credit Tip No. 18
Always pay on time

Your payment history is one of the biggest factors in your credit score.

Credit Tip No. 23
Establish credit with a co-signer

If you need to establish credit, applying for a loan or credit product with a co-borrower or co-signer can be a good way to start.

Credit Tip No. 28
Contact your lenders

If you ever have trouble paying a credit account, contact the lender rather than simply not paying. Oftentimes, they can work with you.

Credit Tip No. 4
Don't open too many accounts

Opening up a bunch of credit accounts you don't need may negatively impact your credit score.

Credit Tip No. 9
Live within your means

By setting a budget and living within your means, you can avoid using credit to overextend yourself.

Credit Tip No. 14
Set up alerts

Set up email and text alerts, as well as autopay, to help ensure that you pay your bills on time and build positive credit history.

Credit Tip No. 19
Check report for errors

Check your credit report at least once a year with all three bureaus (Experian, TransUnion, and Equifax) to make sure there are no errors.

Credit Tip No. 24
Bank online regularly

Check your credit card activity regularly with online banking, instead of waiting for your paper statement to arrive in the mail.

Credit Tip No. 5
Mix up your credit

A balanced mix of types of credit (real estate, auto, credit card, etc.) may help your credit score.

Credit Tip No. 10
Beware of moving debt

Be wary of moving around debt repeatedly — you need to pay debt down to improve your credit score.

Credit Tip No. 15
Open credit only when needed

Apply for and open new credit accounts only if you need them, because too many may lower your credit score.

Credit Tip No. 20
Be patient... it takes time

Even though positive events show up on your credit history right away, it may still take time to have an effect on your credit score.

Credit Tip No. 25
Be cautious who you apply with

Opening joint accounts with a spouse or partner will impact both parties' credit files and credit scores, and both are responsible for the debt.

Together we'll go far

