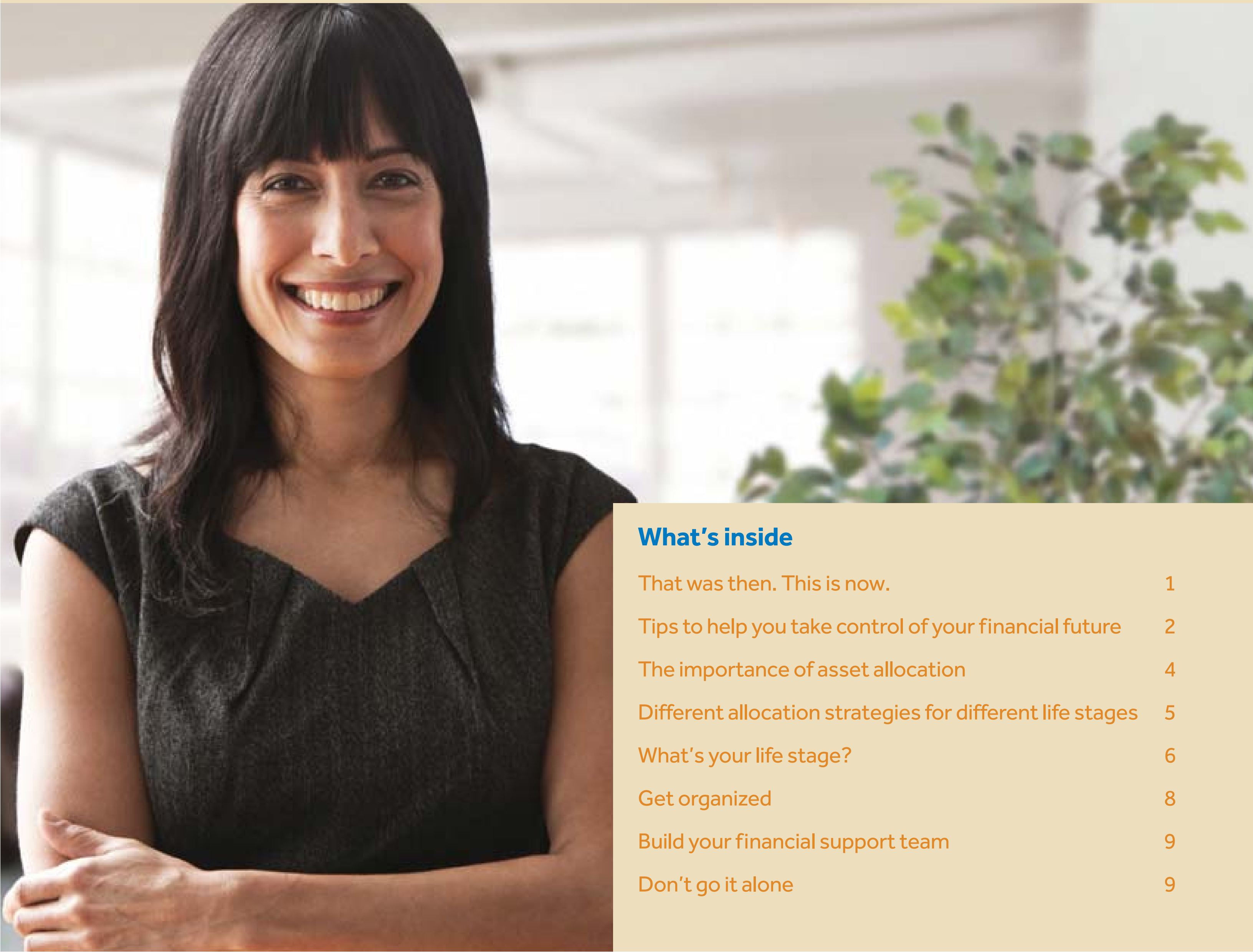
Savvy investments for her

Take an active role in your money matters

New York Life MainStay Investments®

You are powerful, but are you prepared?

Many women are more involved with their finances now, than compared to just a few short years ago. But, are they getting the most out of their investments or investing in line with their life stage? To take full advantage of the opportunities in the financial markets and ensure that your money matters are sound today and tomorrow, it is important to take even greater control of your financial future. This guide will help you to take a more active role in your finances throughout the different phases of your life.



What's inside

That was then. This is now.

In previous generations, there was most likely a man at the head of the household who was responsible for making all of the family's financial decisions. While it may be a difficult concept to grasp now, many women were not even aware of how or where the family's savings were invested.

Fast forward to today. Women are powerful and accomplished, earning and achieving more than ever before. And, studies repeatedly show that women have made tremendous strides in terms of being more actively involved with the family finances, empowering them to actively seek opportunities to help increase their financial security.

Today, you must move beyond the outdated notion that investing is "just for men" or that women are simply not interested in financial discussions.

The reality is that more often than not, women successfully manage their household's budget and cash flow, but generally do not transfer that skill to personal finance.

It is important for women to overcome these barriers and confidently manage their own financial affairs.

This guide will help you:

- Determine if you are getting the most out of your investments.
- Take advantage of the opportunities available in the financial markets.
- Make investment decisions appropriate for your current life stage.
- Make sound financial decisions that will enhance your financial security today, and in retirement.

Finding the right mix of investments depends on your available assets, your financial goals, your time horizon, and your tolerance for risk. It is important to ensure a balance between three things: liquidity, return, and risk.

Tips to help you take control of your financial future

Financial security has become a top priority among women. And, security about any topic is rooted in confidence and knowledge. Part of becoming a savvy investor is making a commitment to learn about investment basics and increasing your ability to confidently manage your finances. Consider the following tips:

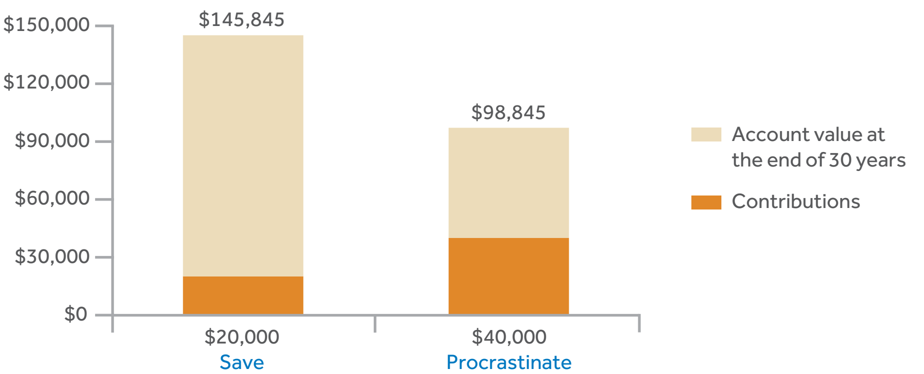
- **Be involved in your money matters.** When it comes to household responsibilities, many couples find it easier and more productive to divide and conquer. This may be a sound practice for household chores, but it is not a strategy that should be followed when finances are concerned. It is important for both spouses to be equally involved in all joint financial discussions and decisions.
- **Develop the ability to manage your own assets.** There is a 90% likelihood that a woman will be financially self-reliant at some point in her life due to divorce, becoming a widow, or choosing to marry later in life or not at all.[1]
- **Do your homework.** Successful investors research options and thoroughly understand what they are buying. Women are responsible for most of the consumer purchases in the U.S. This shows that women are generally educated and careful consumers, which can make them savvy investors, too.

1. The Simple Dollar, "Guide to Financial Independence for Women," 2014.

- **Put your needs first.** If you are like most women, you spend a good amount of time taking care of others—and that sometimes means setting your own needs aside. But, investing for your retirement is a necessity that you cannot afford to put off. In fact, based on the average life expectancy for women, you should plan to accumulate enough funds to last at least 20 years after you retire, so the earlier you start the better. The hypothetical chart below illustrates this point.
- **Step outside your comfort zone.** An important part of investing is to identify the amount of risk you are comfortable with.

When it comes to their investments, women tend to be less willing to accept risk and generally gravitate toward "safer" investments. Following this strategy could leave you more susceptible to the long-term effects of inflation which could make it more difficult to achieve your financial goals. While no investment should keep you awake at night, considering options that carry slightly more risk than you would normally accept can help you build a strong financial foundation. Your financial professional can help identify appropriate options that will continue to support your goals.

Assets May Grow Faster if You Start Saving Early



Save

Savings method—Save $2,000 annually for 10 years; then stop for the next 20 years.
Total amount saved—$2,000 x 10 years = $20,000
Value at the end of 30 years = $145,845

Procrastinate

Savings method—10 years go by with no savings; then save $2,000 annually for the next 20 years.
Total amount saved—$2,000 x 20 years = $40,000
Value at the end of 30 years = $98,845

This hypothetical example assumes an annual 8% rate of return and does not take into account income taxes or investment fees and expenses. This example is for illustrative purposes only and does not represent the performance of any specific investment. An investor's actual return is not likely to be consistent from year to year, and there is no guarantee that a specific rate of return will be achieved.

The importance of asset allocation

According to one prominent study, asset allocation is by far the largest determinant of a portfolio's success—significantly more important than the individual securities selected and timing of an investment.

Asset allocation is the process of dividing your investments across different asset classes, such as stocks and bonds. Effective asset allocation helps an investor to lessen overall investment risk because each asset class has a different correlation to the others. For example, stocks and bonds tend to have opposite return cycles—when stocks rise, bonds tend to decline. Over the long term, an appropriate asset allocation (what you are buying) could prove more important than timing (when you are buying) because generally, a decline in one asset class can be offset by an increase in another. An asset allocation model helps to determine how much of your investment portfolio should be placed into each asset class.

For example, one common asset allocation model may recommend 60% of assets in stocks and 40% in bonds.[2] Asset allocation models are specific to each investor, and are designed to reflect personal financial goals, life stage, individual tolerance for risk, and investment time horizon.

But, asset allocation alone isn't enough. Solely diversifying investment assets according to a particular allocation model will not alleviate the need to exercise discretion over proper investment selection. Consult with your financial professional to help identify an investment mix that aligns with your personal financial goals, time horizon, and tolerance for risk.

Most Asset Allocation Models Support Four Basic Investment Objectives		
	This Model Portfolio is Designed to...	**This Model Portfolio May Appeal to...**
1. Preservation of Capital	Maintain and preserve existing capital while striving to reduce the risk of capital loss.	Investors that need to access their capital in the near future, such as those that plan on purchasing a home or business, or paying for a child's college education.
2. Income	Generate current income to help satisfy living expenses.	Investors with immediate income needs, such as those nearing retirement.
3. Balanced	Generate a steady combination of growth, income, and capital preservation.	Investors interested in a lower-than-average fluctuation in their investment portfolio, such as retirees with sufficient current income levels who wish to preserve their capital.
4. Growth	Generate a longer-term return on investment as opposed to generating current income.	Investors interested in building long-term wealth, such as those early to a career.

2. Consult with your financial professional to help identify an investment mix that aligns with your personal financial goals, time horizon, and tolerance for risk.

Different allocation strategies for different life stages

As you progress through life, you will find that your financial needs will develop to align with your particular life stage and personal objectives. For example, when you are younger, you will generally be more focused on accumulating long-term wealth, but as you move closer to retirement, you will most likely find yourself revisiting your investment portfolio to ensure that your asset mix will be able to support your income needs. When following an asset allocation investment strategy, your allocation model must continually evolve to help you financially prepare for the different stages of your life.

- **Getting started.** If you are like most early in their career, saving for retirement is probably toward the back of your mind. However, investing early can have a sizeable impact on your portfolio. And, because time is on your side, you have the flexibility to accept an asset allocation model weighted with less conservative investments, such as stocks.
- **Nearing retirement.** As you approach retirement, your investment mix should differ from when you were younger and just starting out. Now that your investment time horizon is shorter, it is likely that you are less willing to tolerate the volatility generally associated with stocks. If this is the case, consider shifting your investment portfolio to reflect a higher dependence on income-oriented investments, such as bonds.
- **Living in retirement.** Asset allocation strategies in retirement differ from those you might have used while saving for retirement. That's because portfolio volatility becomes a greater concern due to the impact that withdrawals can have on your overall asset pool. Typically, you will want to optimize income to pay for your expenses while maintaining investments that provide a growth potential as a hedge against inflation.

A rule of thumb used to calculate the percentage of your investment portfolio that should be kept in stocks is to subtract your current age from 100. For example, if you are 45, it is recommended that you keep 55% of your portfolio in stocks.[2]

What's your life stage?

In addition to the common challenges facing most women, there are other issues you may encounter based on your particular stage in life. Below is a summary of various life stages, common financial challenges you may experience during that time, and some of the opportunities available to help you overcome those challenges. Your financial professional can help you to review your current situation—as well as what may be on the horizon—and tailor your financial strategy accordingly.

Life Stage	Snapshot	Common Challenges	Financial Opportunities
Single working woman new to her career	"I am new to my career and have no spouse, partner, or children. I am living on my own with the new responsibility of managing my own household."	▪ Planning and preparing for the unexpected. ▪ Managing debt. ▪ Saving for major financial goals. ▪ Saving for a secure retirement.	▪ Develop a budget and emergency fund. ▪ Consolidate debt. ▪ Establish an automatic investment plan to help save for major life goals.[3] ▪ Enroll in a corporate retirement plan and make regular contributions.
Single working woman with an established career	"I am established in my career and have made several job changes for career advancement. I have no spouse, partner, or children and manage my own household."	▪ Maximizing the potential of a current income stream. ▪ Saving for major financial goals. ▪ Saving for a secure retirement. ▪ Choosing appropriate investments.	▪ Consolidate corporate retirement accounts. ▪ Maximize corporate retirement plan contributions. ▪ Establish an automatic investment plan to help save for major life goals.[3] ▪ Establish a retirement savings plan.
Single parent	"I have no spouse or partner and have one or more children. I work and I manage my own household."	▪ Preparing for the unexpected. ▪ Saving for a child's education. ▪ Saving for major financial goals. ▪ Saving for a secure retirement. ▪ Establishing plans to financially protect a child.	▪ Develop a budget and emergency fund. ▪ Purchase life insurance. ▪ Contribute to a college savings plan. ▪ Establish an automatic investment plan to help save for major life goals.[3] ▪ Enroll in a corporate retirement plan and make regular contributions. ▪ Explore estate planning needs to financially protect children.

3. An automatic investment plan can neither guarantee a profit nor protect against a loss.

Helpful Hint...

Start systematically investing as soon as you begin your career, so that a reasonable amount is saved, even after just a few years. The compounding effect can help to speed up your savings.[4]

Life Stage	Snapshot	Common Challenges	Financial Opportunities
Managing a family	"I have a spouse or partner and already have one or more children, and may continue to expand my family."	▪ Protecting your family. ▪ Saving for a child's education. ▪ Saving for retirement. ▪ Assisting aging or ailing parents.	▪ Purchase life insurance. ▪ Contribute to a college savings plan. ▪ If working, enroll in or maintain regular contributions to a corporate retirement plan. ▪ Review long-term care insurance.
Nearing retirement	"I am actively preparing for retirement, which is roughly 10 years away."	▪ Experiencing the strains of the "sandwich generation" (caring for aging parents and adult children at the same time). ▪ Having enough money for retirement. ▪ Funding potential health care expenses in retirement.	▪ Develop a savings plan that accounts for multiple financial responsibilities. ▪ Analyze current financial situation. ▪ Adjust investment portfolio and strategy according to progress toward goals. ▪ Review/Consider long-term care insurance.
Living in retirement	"I have already retired (or will retire in the next year) or am semi-retired."	▪ Adjusting spending habits. ▪ The need to continue working to satisfy expenses. ▪ Maintaining an adequate level of emergency funds. ▪ Planning for unexpected medical costs.	▪ Outline retirement wants and needs. ▪ Prioritize personal and financial goals. ▪ Review and rebalance investment portfolio. ▪ Develop a plan to meet unexpected medical costs and other emergencies.
Recently divorced or widowed	"I have recently taken control of my own finances after depending fully or in part on someone else to do so."	▪ Unorganized important personal and financial documents. ▪ Day-to-day and long-term expense management. ▪ Meeting long-term financial goals without assistance.	▪ Organize personal and financial documents. ▪ Analyze current financial situation. ▪ Develop a plan to meet short and long-term financial goals. ▪ Assess corporate retirement plan participation, if applicable. ▪ If applicable, consider any estate planning and education needs associated with being a single parent.

4. Systematic investment techniques do not assure a profit or protect against a loss.

Get organized

Getting organized, whether personally, professionally, or financially, is a common goal for most women. And, while it's easy to understand the need for organization, there is a seemingly endless list of daily priorities that can put this important task on the back burner. Being organized will help you to be prepared for emergency situations, as well as better position yourself to make important financial decisions for your future.

- **Gather important documents.** Regardless of what stage of life you may be in, knowing where key documents and financial statements—like bank and investment account information —are located is important. Knowing where your important financial papers are located will help you to regularly review your investment strategy with your financial professional and swiftly implement any necessary changes.
- **Take stock of assets and liabilities.** Regular monitoring of your cash flow is important throughout your life because your needs and expenses will change over time.
- **Gain control of debt and increase savings.** Taking steps to pay down any outstanding debt is vital to your long-term financial security. It's also a good idea to create an emergency fund that can help pay for any unexpected expenses.
- **Review your will and beneficiary designations.** It's a good idea to review your will and beneficiary designations at various life stages and when major life events occur to make sure that they always reflect the people that are most important to you.
- **Explore legacy planning.** Especially if your children are minors, work with your financial professional to establish a trust and select a trustee to ensure that your assets are managed for the benefit of your children.

Build your financial support team

As your life stages change, you may require more sophisticated financial advice, especially as your goals evolve and become more complex. When it comes to your financial future, one of the most important decisions you can make is to seek the guidance of a financial professional. A financial professional is trained to help you select investments that are suited to your specific needs. It's important to find someone you are comfortable working with, so don't hesitate to interview several potential financial professionals or ask for referrals before you make your choice.

Whoever you decide to work with will be an instrumental partner to help you make well-informed decisions and maintain your investment plan. The following points can help you determine if a particular financial professional is a good match for your individual needs:

- **Do they come highly recommended?** It's always a good idea to ask for at least five references from a financial professional's current clients.
- **What is their financial philosophy and approach to investing?** Make sure their approach to managing money makes you feel comfortable and secure.
- **Is the financial professional part of a team?** If so, do they work with specialists that focus on different areas, such as retirement, college funding, or estate planning?
- **What are their qualifications?** Ensure that any of the licenses and registrations required for your financial professional's practice are up-to-date and in good standing.
- **Are they experienced?** Do they have the experience to serve as the primary coordinator for your entire financial team, including your accountant, attorney, and tax advisor?
- **Are they accessible?** How often can you expect to meet—quarterly, annually, or every few months? Would this be in person or over the phone?

Don't go it alone

You may have already discovered the importance of working with a financial professional to help you develop a personalized investment strategy. As you move through the various stages of your life, remember that your financial professional is a valuable resource who can help you regularly review and refine your personal financial needs and, as your circumstances change, recommend any adjustments to your investment strategy.

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