

A Lufthansa flight arrives from Munich, Germany at Miami International Airport, on Nov. 8, 2021, in Miami. Three major airlines have reported canceling dozens of flights as illnesses largely tied to the omicron variant of COVID-19 take a toll on flight crew numbers during the busy holiday travel season. (AP)



**Lufthansa, United, Delta cancel flights over Christmas**

At least three major airlines said they have canceled dozens of flights because illnesses largely tied to the omicron variant of COVID-19 have taken a toll on flight crew numbers during the busy holiday travel season. Germany-based Lufthansa said Friday that it was canceling a dozen long-haul transatlantic flights over the Christmas holiday period because of

a "massive rise" in sick leave among pilots. The cancellations on flights to Houston, Boston and Washington come despite a "large buffer" of additional staff for the period. The airline says it couldn't speculate on whether COVID-19 infections or quarantines were responsible because it was not informed about the sort of illness. Passengers were booked on

other flights. Lufthansa said in a statement that "we planned a very large buffer for the vacation period. But this was not sufficient due to the high rate of people calling in sick." U.S.-based Delta Air Lines and United Airlines said they had to cancel dozens of Christmas Eve flights because of staff shortages tied to omicron. United canceled 170 flights,

and Delta called off 133, according to FlightAware. "The nationwide spike in omicron cases this week has had a direct impact on our flight crews and the people who run our operation," United said in a statement. "As a result, we've unfortunately had to cancel some flights and are notifying impacted customers in advance of them coming to the airport." (AP)

**Limit the term of your loan to a maximum of five years**

**8 rules for saving, borrowing and spending money**

By Liz Weston  
NerdWallet

The best personal finance advice is tailored to your individual situation. That said, a few rules of thumb can cut through the confusion that often surrounds money decisions and help you build a solid financial foundation.

The following guidelines for saving, borrowing, spending and protecting your money are culled from nearly three decades of writing about personal finance.

**1. Prioritize saving for retirement**

In an ideal world, you'd start saving with your first paycheck and keep going until you're ready to retire. You also wouldn't touch that money until retirement. Even if you can't save 15% of your pre-tax income for retirement, as recommended by Fidelity and other financial services firms, anything you put aside can help give you a more comfortable future. Aim to take full advantage of any company match you get from a 401(k) at work - that's free money - and borrow against or cash out retirement funds only as a last resort.

**2. Save for a rainy day**

You may have read that you need an emergency fund equal to three to six months of expenses, but it can take years to save that much. That's too long to put off other priorities, like saving for retirement. A starter emergency fund of \$500 can be your first goal, and then you can build it up. While you're saving, try to create other sources of emergency cash, such as a Roth IRA (you can pull out your contributions at any time without taxes or penalties), space on your credit cards or an unused home equity line of credit.

**3. Save for college**

Got kids? Open a 529 college savings plan and contribute at least the minimum, which is typically \$15 to \$25 a month. Retirement savings comes first, but anything you can save will reduce how much your child may need to borrow. Also, research shows the simple act of saving for college increases the chances that a child from a low- to moderate-income family will go to college.

**4. Borrow smart for college**

A college degree can pay off in higher earnings, but lenders may allow you to borrow far more than you can comfortably repay. If you're borrowing for your own education, consider limiting your total debt to what



Bajju Bhatt, (left), and Vladimir Tenev, Co-Founders of Robinhood, walk on Wall Street following their company's IPO at Nasdaq, on July 29, 2021 in New York. Initial public offerings exploded in 2021 as companies sought to take advantage of a soaring stock market. There were 389 IPOs through the first week of December, easily surpassing the total of 221 for all of last year, according to Renaissance Capital. (AP)

you expect to make your first year out of school.

If you're a parent borrowing for a child's education, aim for payments that are no more than 10% of your after-tax income and that still allow you to save for retirement. If your payments are higher than 10% of your after-tax income, investigate income-driven repayment plans that could bring down your costs.

**5. Use credit cards as a convenience**

Credit cards offer convenience and can protect you from fraud and disputes with merchants. But credit card interest tends to be high, so don't

carry credit card balances if you can avoid it. If you routinely pay your balances in full, look for a rewards card with a sign-up bonus that returns at least 1.5% of what you spend.

**6. Finance your home smartly**

If you want to be a homeowner, the best time to buy your first home is when you're financially ready and in a position to stay put for a few years. Opt for a mortgage rate that's fixed for as long as you plan to remain in the home, and don't make extra payments against the principal until you've paid off all other debt and are on track for retirement.

**7. Buy used vehicles and drive**

**them for years**

Buying a car right now isn't a great idea: supply-chain kinks and other pandemic-related issues have inflated the cost of both new and used cars. In general, though, buying a used car can save you a ton of money over your driving lifetime, as can driving your car for many years before replacing it. These days, a well-maintained car can last 200,000 miles without major issues, according to J.D. Power.

This means you can get roughly 13 years of service out of your car if you drive it 15,000 miles a year. Ideally, you would pay cash for cars. If you

need to borrow, try to limit the term of your loan to a maximum of five years.

**8. Insure against catastrophic expenses**

Use insurance to protect yourself against catastrophic expenses rather than smaller costs that you can easily pay out of pocket. If you have sufficient savings, consider raising the deductibles on your policies to save money on premiums.

Be careful about high-deductible health insurance policies, though. Having a high deductible could cause you to put off medical care, and it's better to err on the side of safety when it comes to health. (AP)

**'It takes diligence'**

**Now is the time to build your 'credit'**

By Colin Beresford  
NerdWallet

Sooner than you may realize, your credit score will start to matter.

A solid credit score can be the difference between qualifying for an apartment or a low-interest car loan or missing out. So to have credit ready when you need it, the time to start building a good and lengthy credit history is now.

There's more than one way to build credit, and it could be as simple as reporting your ongoing bill payments to the major credit bureaus. But keep in mind: Building credit takes diligence, particularly since missing payments can hurt your score for years to come.

**What is credit and why does it matter?**

Your credit score is a number that typically ranges between 300 and 850 and is calculated based on how reliably you've paid past debts, such as credit card bills. Lenders use your credit score to predict how likely you will repay debt.

Your credit score helps determine the loans you can receive, the interest you'll be charged, the credit cards you can qualify for and the properties you can rent. An employer can even check your credit history. Having a good credit score can save you money later on, mainly through lower interest rates when you secure a loan.

If you're starting with no credit history, you aren't alone. In the U.S., nearly 40% of people between the ages of 20 and 24 have little to no credit history to generate a score, according to the Consumer Finance and Protection Bureau. Unfortunately, the same is true for roughly 20% of the population.

Building your credit might seem overwhelming if you haven't thought about it before, but there are many strategies to employ, even if you're just beginning. Start by establishing good habits with managing debt, such as not taking on more debt than you can afford, says Brittany Mollica, a certified financial planner based in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Missing payments will damage your score and can become a burden when you need to borrow money in the future.

"Getting in good habits of always paying your bills is really important," Mollica says. "You don't want to have to be climbing out of a hole of all sorts of credit card debt that you've piled up, especially starting out early on."

**Credit cards -- and alternative cards**

Credit cards can be a great tool to establish credit, but they can also damage your score if you take on more debt than you can handle.

If a parent or another trusted person in your life has a high credit limit and a long history of making timely payments, you could become an authorized user on their account and benefit from their good credit. This is one of the easiest ways to lengthen your credit history, says Blaine Thiedeman, a certified financial planner in Arvada, Colorado.

Becoming an authorized user will also impact your credit utilization rate, or the amount of money you owe to lenders divided by the total credit available to you, which can help your credit score.

If you have your own income, you can apply for a credit card when you're 18 years old; otherwise, you have to wait until you are 21. A secured credit card is typically the best credit card to start with. A cash deposit backs these cards, and since the credit card company can take that deposit if you miss payments, people with short or poor credit histories can qualify.

The deposit you have to make for a secured credit card could be a burden, and if that's the case, an alternative card might be better for you. These cards use income and bank account information to determine your creditworthiness rather than your credit score.

**Monthly bills**

If you live independently, payments for rent, utilities and phone bills can all be reported to credit bureaus. So paying those bills can build your credit if they're on time and you have them reported.

Unlike credit card payments, these payments aren't reported automatically and can require a third-party service, such as Experian Boost or UltraFICO, to make the credit bureaus aware of your payments.

Remember, these services sometimes require a fee and reporting your bill payments may not always impact your credit score; instead, they may just appear on your credit report.

**Loans**

Making regular payments on loans can also help you build your credit. And even if you don't have any credit history, some loans are available.

Credit-builder loans rely on income rather than credit for approval. If you're approved, the loan sits in a bank account and becomes available once you pay it off. Your monthly payments are reported to the major credit bureaus.

Student loans are another loan you can use to build your credit when you're just starting. Federal student loans don't require credit to qualify, while most private student loans do. Paying off your loans will help you grow your credit history, and you can get started while you're still in school by making interest-only payments. (AP)

**Grand Hyper opens their 26th store in Sulaibiya, Agility Compound, Industrial 2**



Grand Hypermarkets counted as the foremost hypermarket chain in GCC region has opened their 26th store in Kuwait at Sulaibiya, Agility Compound, Industrial 2 on the 23rd December 2021 thereby increasing the brand's global count to 78. The new store was Mr. Jassim Mohammed Khamees Al Sharrah in the presence of MD Dr. Anwar Ameen Chelat, ED Mr. M.K Aboobacker, RD Mr. Ayyoob Kachery, DRO Mr. Thehaseer Ali, Mr. Fawaz Salem Ali Al Hosaynan, Mr. Aslam Chelat, CEO Mr. Mohammed Suneer, COO Mr. Rahil Bassim, BDM Mr. Sanin Wasim along with other management members and well wishers.

Earlier during the inauguration of their 25th store at Shuwaikh, Grand Hyper MD Dr. Anwar Ameen had stated that Grand Hyper will spread its presence to every location in Kuwait to enable customers with easy access to food and other necessary products at their vicinity as most people prefer to travel in their locality for shopping during this time. He also added that the group's vision is to reach a total number of 50



stores spread across The State of Kuwait by the end of year 2022.

Grand Hypermarket is a household name in Kuwait. It has a strong reputation of giving high quality products for best price. This makes Grand Hyper the preferred choice for both citizens and expats as one stop shopping destination for grocery, food, personal care garments, electronics and household.

This new store at Sulaibiya, aims to satisfy the need of presence of an affordable retailer to the residents there by spreading the goodness of presence of the most

affordable retailer who house products of all kinds from across the world. This store is located at Sulaibiya, in Industrial Area 2 and would thereby cater to the daily shopping requirements of Kuwaiti's and the expat population residing there.

The new Grand Hyper which also happens to be the 26th branch in Kuwait has opened abiding to the guidelines and safety measures laid down by Ministry of Health, Kuwait. Grand has taken all precautionary measures ensuring safety of customers visiting the store.

**Tesla to halt games on 'infotainment' screens**

DETROIT, Dec 25, (AP) - Under pressure from U.S. auto safety regulators, Tesla has agreed to stop allowing video games to be played on center touch screens while its vehicles are moving.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says the company will send out a software update over the Internet so the function called "Passenger Play" will be locked and won't work while vehicles are in motion.

The move comes one day after the agency announced it would open a formal investigation into distracted driving concerns about Tesla's video games, some of which could be played while cars are being driven.

An agency spokeswoman says in a statement Thursday that the change came after regulators discussed concerns about the system with Tesla. The first update went out Wednesday as part of Tesla's holiday software release, and the rest of the vehicles should get it today.

The statement says NHTSA regularly talks about infotainment screens with all automakers. A message was left Thursday seeking comment from Tesla, which has disbanded its media relations department.

The agency says its investigation of Tesla's feature will continue even with the update. It was not clear whether NHTSA would require Tesla to do a formal recall with the update. In the past the agency has asked Tesla why it should not be required to do recalls with safety-related software updates. "The Vehicle Safety Act prohibits

manufacturers from selling vehicles with defects posing unreasonable risks to safety, including technologies that distract drivers from driving safely," NHTSA's statement said. The agency said it assesses how manufacturers identify and guard against distraction hazards due to misuse or intended use of screens and other convenience technology.

The agency announced Wednesday that it would formally investigate Tesla's screens after an owner from the Portland, Oregon, area filed a complaint when he discovered that a driver could play games while the cars are moving.

The agency said that the "Passenger Play" feature could distract the driver and increase the risk of a crash.

The probe covers about 580,000 Tesla Models S, X, Y and 3 from the 2017 through 2022 model years.

In documents detailing the investigation, NHTSA said "Passenger Play" has been available since December 2020. Before that, enabling gameplay was only possible when its vehicles were in park.

The NHTSA documents do not list any crashes or injuries caused by the problem.

Tesla owner Vince Patton, 59, filed the complaint last month after discovering the gaming feature could be played by drivers. Patton, who loves his car and says he has nothing against Tesla, worries that drivers will play games and become dangerously distracted. "Somebody's going to get killed," he said. "It's absolutely insane."



Vince Patton, a new Tesla owner, demonstrates on Dec. 8, 2021, on a closed course in Portland, Oregon, how he can play video games on the vehicle's console while driving. (AP)