

10 Strategies to Improve Your Credit Score

1. Erase the dings. Contest any entries that are incorrect or a result of identity confusion. Start by contacting the creditor. If they say no then you can go directly to the credit bureau reporting it.
2. Request a credit line increase. Increasing your credit line will improve your credit utilization ratio. This is the percentage of your credit limit you've used, and help your credit score.
3. Pay Off Debt: By lowering your total balance owed, you lower the total amount of interest you pay, improve your ratio, and increase your credit score at the same time.
4. Work With a Reputable Credit Repair Company: There are several companies that are very good at working with the nuances of the Credit Reporting Laws and they can often get items removed due to improper reporting. We'd be happy to introduce you.
5. Consolidate. If you have multiple cards from one issuer, consider consolidating the newer cards into the older cards. You can do this by calling customer service and asking if they offer this, but only do it if they keep the total credit limit the same. The goal of this move is to increase the average age of your revolving lines of credit without reducing your total credit limit, which will affect your credit utilization ratio.
6. Check your credit report. Review your credit report for any errors and omissions. If you have a negative mark that isn't rightfully yours, dispute it and get it removed. If you have an account that's not listed on your report, make sure it's added. You can check your credit report for free once a year through AnnualCreditReport.com.
7. Don't be late. Making on-time payments each month is key to staying on top of your debt and maintaining your score. It might sound boring, but it's a tried-and-true method.
8. Be patient. If you have a major black mark on your credit history – if you've filed for bankruptcy, for example – it will take time to put some space between that event and your score. In most cases, it takes about seven to 10 years to erase the negative effects of a bankruptcy filing from a credit report.
9. Don't become a victim. Credit scores can be ruined quickly if a thief steals your identity and starts creating new accounts and building up debt in your name. To reduce the chances of becoming a victim, review your account statements carefully each month to spot any errors and alert your card issuer if you see any problems. Avoid sharing personal details on social media that would make it easier for someone to hack into your accounts, too, and use hard-to-guess passwords on financial accounts.
10. Maintain accounts in your own name. If you're a college student still spending mom and dad's money, or you're an unemployed spouse with accounts in your partner's name, it's time to set up some accounts in your own name. That will give you the chance to build your own credit history. Most accounts with monthly bills, including for utilities or credit, can help fill out your credit history.

Your credit score is critical in getting financing and can even improve the cost of products such as car insurance. Don't let it hold you hostage by popping up un-expectantly. Check your score often and give me a call if I can help answer any questions.

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