
WOMEN: TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR FINANCIAL LIFE



**ANTHONY T. NEWMAN,
PRESIDENT & CEO
LIFEGUARD FINANCIAL**

It's a harsh truth that instead of taking charge of their own financial futures, many women either leave money matters to the men in their lives or ignore the importance of planning altogether. Couple this with the fact that women face different life challenges and financial risks than men, and it becomes clear why women must take charge of planning their financial futures.

According to the National Center for Women and Retirement Research, as many as 9 out of 10 women will be solely responsible for their finances at some point in their lives. The consequences of such circumstances can financially cripple many women. The numbers speak for themselves:

- Over 75 percent of women are widowed at an average age of 56, and 1 in 4 of these women are broke within two months of being widowed.
- Less than 15 percent of women who are married, or living with a significant other feel responsible for planning retirement.
- Only 41 percent of women participate in their employer's 401(k) plan.
- Eighty-seven percent of poverty stricken, elderly Americans are women.

Knowing How to Handle Your Finances is a Necessity

Women need to be educated and prepared. Understanding your assets now can help prevent financial crises down the road. Becoming educated and prepared doesn't have to be difficult. If you apply yourself, it's fairly straightforward. You can turn to financial professionals who specialize in working with women investors. These professionals can help you to understand how investing works and help you to reach your dreams too.

Some Money Moves Women Can Make:

1. **Get involved in managing the family's finances.** As a couple, spend about 15 to 30 minutes per week discussing the family finances. Make this a regular routine. Understand what is going on with the investments. Review all bank and investment statements monthly. Know where your money is. Keep organized records.
-

-
2. **Be sure to have your own retirement account.** Women often do not have their own retirement accounts. Stay-at-home mothers frequently use all of the household money for the children and food. Nothing is put into retirement plans for these women. Meanwhile, the husband's account is racking up the dough. Then they divorce. Don't let this happen to you.
 3. **Get professional financial advice.** Be sure to get financial advice before you suddenly become single because of divorce or widowhood. This will make your financial road smoother and will prepare you prior to these life events.
 4. **Married women: Plan your financial life as if you will be on your own someday.** Unfortunately, the statistics are real. Half of all marriages end in divorce. Women outlive men by seven years. Plan your life with this in mind. Manage your finances together, have separate credit cards in your name. Make sure that your name appears on all investment accounts accumulated during marriage. Get adequate term life insurance coverage that will cover all last expenses and replace at least 60 percent of joint earnings.
 5. **Don't use your 401(k) as an in-and out fund.** Many women use their retirement accounts to rescue their families from tight financial jams. This account should be used for retirement, not as an emergency or vacation fund. Establish a money market account for emergencies and leave your retirement funds for what they are meant to be used for – your retirement.
 6. **Write down your financial goals.** Sit down and make a list of all your financial goals. Knowing what you want helps to put you on the road to financial success. Whether it's learning to make wise investments or planning for retirement, you have to know what you want in order to plan how to achieve it. The Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Research has found that consumers who use professional financial advisors worry less about their financial futures.

Establishing a financial plan is a worthwhile endeavor and is not merely the province of people who have lots of money. Financial planning is designed for everyone. It helps you focus on your dreams and financial goals. Most people find it difficult to save or invest without specific reasons. When goals are verbalized and then written down, you will understand why saving money is important to you.

Retirement Planning is a Journey

Are you prepared for retirement? Your retirement years can be a period of 30 years or longer. Learn about the different investment options and retirement plans that are available for you. You don't have to be a financial genius to get started. Read a book, take a class, take the initiative and start an investment club. Learning about your money doesn't have to be difficult. What's right for you will depend on your goals, feelings about risk and the length of time to invest? Keep in mind your picture of what you want your retirement to look like. That picture will help you stay on the right road towards your dream. Consider these barriers to financial

security from the Women's Institute of a Secure Retirement (WISER):

Top Five Reasons Why Retirement Is a Challenge for Women

1. Two out of three working women earn less than \$30,000 per year.
2. Nine out of ten working women earn less than \$50,000.
3. Half of all women work in traditionally female, relatively low paying jobs without pensions.
4. Women retirees receive only half the average pension benefits that men receive.
5. Women's earning average \$.76 for every \$1 earned by men – a lifetime loss of \$300,000.

Take Control!

No more excuses. Women can become good investors with the right tools. It's time to get more involved in your financial life. The most important thing is setting goals and having a plan to meet them. If you want your financial life to have a different bottom line, you have to do the hard work.

For an assessment of your financial and estate plan, call Lifeguard Financial/ Lifeguard Wealth Management LLC today to schedule a free, no-obligation consultation at 1-800-942-1936.
