



Consumer News & Views

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CONSUMER COUNCIL



In This Issue

FINANCIAL WELLNESS CHECKLIST P3
.....

RECORD AIR TRAVEL P6
.....

ARE PAINKILLERS SAFE P8
.....

WHO ARE SCAM VICTIMS? P11
.....

CLIMATE CHANGE RISING TEMPS P12
.....

WHAT'S IN YOUR BABY WIPES? P14
.....

LOGIX FED CREDIT UNION P15
.....

ENT CREDIT UNION P16
.....

ACC WRAP-UP P17

Consumer Confidence Declines in June



The Conference Board said that its consumer confidence index eased to 100.4 this month from a downwardly revised 101.3 in May. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the index slipping to 100.0 from the previously reported 102.0.

U.S. consumer sentiment deteriorated in June as households worried about inflation and incomes, a survey showed on Friday.

- Consumers' 12-month inflation expectations fell to 5.3% from 5.4% in May.
- Though fewer consumers planned to buy vehicles and household appliances over the next six months, more planned to go on vacation.
- Labor-market resilience is driving consumer spending, underpinning the economy despite the Federal Reserve's hefty interest-rate hikes in 2022 and 2023 to quell inflation.
- Consumers were positive about the stock market, with 48.4 percent expecting stock prices to increase over the year ahead, compared to 23.5 percent expecting a decrease and 28.1 percent expecting no change.
- Politics stayed on the radar of consumers.

The Present Situation Index—based on consumers' assessment of current business and labor market conditions—increased to 141.5 (1985=100) from 140.8 last month.

The Expectations Index—based on consumers' short-term outlook for income, business, and labor market conditions—fell to 73.0 (1985=100) in June, down from 74.9 in May.

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE TO MEMBERS

The annual meeting of the American Consumer Council and its affiliated chapters will be held on Friday, August 23, 2024 at 9:00 am EDT. The meeting will be held at the Lansdowne Resort, Leesburg, VA. All members are welcome to attend. To register for this meeting, please email us at: Info@AmericanConsumerCouncil.org to reserve a seat. There is no cost to attend the business meeting from 9:00 am – 10:00 a.m.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we hope to see you there!

How to Create a Financial Wellness Checklist that WORKS



As Americans continue to deal with financial stress due to soaring inflation, higher gas prices and rising food costs, taking inventory of your current finances and preparing for the unexpected can help you make more informed decisions about your finances and set new financial goals.

According to a 2018 financial capability report from FINRA, 53% of Americans reported that thinking about their finances made them anxious. However, given the economic effects of the pandemic, including supply chain issues and rising inflation, it's likely that those numbers are even higher today.

If you share that anxiety, it's crucial to understand that shying away from your finances is not the answer. In fact, it's just the opposite. Practicing financial wellness will help ease your anxiety because it empowers you to take charge of your finances and work towards setting yourself up for a brighter future.

8 Questions to Help Your Financial Well-Being

This checklist is a list of questions that will help you determine where you stand financially and what your goals should be for the future.

Everyone's situation is unique, so no two checklists will look exactly alike, and this isn't a one-time activity. You should review it at least once a year to make sure that you're still on track to meet your financial goals.

Here are the major questions that you'll want to ask.

Am I Saving Enough Money for Emergencies?

As a general rule of thumb, it's a good idea to have enough money in a savings account to cover 3 to 6 months' worth of expenses. The goal is to have sufficient funds to cover a large, unexpected expense or keep you afloat if you lose your job.

If you're financially struggling, even saving a little can be helpful. Erin Ellis, Accredited Financial Counselor at Philadelphia Federal Credit Union (PFCU), believes that creating a habit of saving money consistently is more important than how much you can put away at any given time.

"Think about setting a goal to add money to your savings account on a monthly basis or each time you get paid," she advises. "It may take a bit of time to [build up your fund] and sometimes you may need to dip into it, but if you start a habit of saving consistently, you'll eventually get where you want to be."

Am I Spending More Than I Make?

According to Enzo Pellegrino, certified financial planner and founder of TLWM Financial, the easiest way to determine if you're spending more than you make is to keep an eye on your account balances. If they're increasing over time, you should be good to go. If your account balance is decreasing, it may be a warning sign.

Still, it's important to note that overspending isn't solely attributable to lifestyle creep or taking on more expenses as your income increases. It's also the case that your dollars may just not be stretching as far as they used to. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, food prices are up 10.8% year-over-year from April 2022, representing the largest 12-month increase since 1980.

Similarly, housing costs are also on the rise. The Pew Research Center found that 46% of American renters spent 30% of their income on housing costs, and another 23% spent 50% of their income just keeping a roof over their heads. Since then, those numbers have likely increased since CoStar Group, a real estate data source, found that rents rose 11.3% last year on a national scale.

CONTINUED**What's My Credit Score and How Can I Improve It?**

Unfortunately, there's no one-size-fits-all solution for improving credit scores. If you have a collections account on your credit reports, it may be more challenging for you to build credit than someone who is starting out and has no negative marks on their reports. Ellis emphasizes that it's essential to make all of your payments on time, including credit cards, medical bills, student loans, and buy now, pay later purchases. According to FICO, just one late payment that's 30 days old can knock over 80 points off your credit score if you have excellent credit.

Beyond that, she also feels that it's also important to pay as much above the minimum payment as you can each month. Ideally, you should strive to pay off your credit card balances in full, but if you're unable to do so, she suggests paying more than you spend to decrease the total amount that you owe.

Do I Have a Plan for Paying Off Debt?

If you have unpaid balances, Ellis feels that creating a plan to tackle your debt is essential. However, the plan can vary depending on how many balances you have in your name and the interest rates charged on each of those accounts.

"If you only have one unpaid balance, the plan is pretty simple. You just make the largest payment you can until that balance is fully paid off," she says. On the other hand, if you have multiple debts, it's a good idea to follow a debt pay off plan.

The method Ellis suggests is more commonly known as the debt avalanche method. You make the minimum payment on all of your accounts, except the one that charges the highest interest rate. For that card, you'll want to make as large of a payment as possible, and you'll continue doing so until that balance is paid. Then, use the same method on the account with the next-highest interest rate.

The downside of the debt avalanche method is that it can take a while to see substantial progress, especially if the balance on your highest-interest debt is fairly large.

How Much Are My Retirement Savings Worth Today?

When it comes to retirement savings, Pellegrino says it's all about knowing where you stand today and how much money you'll need to live comfortably once it's time to retire.

"Think about how much you'll want to spend on a monthly basis when you're ready to retire. Then, take some time to figure out how much money you'll receive from non-investment sources like Social Security," he suggests. "The difference between those two numbers is the amount that you should aim to save for retirement."

While that advice may sound daunting, particularly given the way the stock market has been fluctuating lately, it's important to remember that saving for retirement is a long-term goal. Making a habit of contributing to your accounts regularly is what's really going to make a difference in the long run.

Do I Have Disability Protection if I Can't Work?

As the name suggests, disability protection is an insurance policy meant to help you provide income if you become disabled and can no longer work. There are typically two types of plans to consider, short-term disability insurance, which is meant to provide for you while you're suffering from a temporary illness or injury, and long-term disability insurance, which is more permanent.

Both experts recommend taking advantage of any employer-offered plans. Typically, those options will be more affordable and may have fewer restrictions compared to policies offered by insurance brokers. The Bureau of Labor Statistics found that short-term disability insurance typically costs around \$0.05 per hour worked while long-term disability insurance costs around \$0.06 per hour worked.

Once you have an idea of your options, add up your monthly expenses and compare that number to the amount of income you receive from the plan that's being offered to you. If you're self-employed or need additional coverage, you can purchase disability insurance through an insurance broker. However, be aware that these programs come at a cost and that insurers may impose certain eligibility requirements.

CONTINUED**Is My Life Insurance Coverage Enough to Provide for My Family?**

Life insurance is meant to help financially provide for your loved ones if you die unexpectedly. While there are many different types of life insurance to choose from, people generally either select a term policy, which lasts for a set number of years or a whole policy, which will last until death as long as you keep paying your premiums.

The need for life insurance depends on individual factors. As a rule of thumb, if you'll leave behind any expenses when you die, you should think about getting a policy to cover those costs. Then, the next step is to determine how much coverage you need. For that, Pellegrino recommends considering the costs of some of your biggest expenses.

"Think about if your house needs to get paid off, if your kids need to go to college, if your spouse will need to depend on your retirement income," he advises. "Those costs added together will give you an idea of how much coverage you may need."

Do I Have a Will and Is It Up to Date?

If you don't currently have a will, Pellegrino recommends creating one as soon as possible. He cautions that, if there is no will left behind, your state will typically be in charge of what happens to your assets. This process is better known as probate. Additionally, each state has different rules for determining how probate works, so the process can often be costly and time-consuming.

"Most people have worked too hard to have someone else decide what happens to their estate," he says. "That's why it's so crucial to have the right documents in place."

Once you've created a will, he suggests that you review it at least once a year. Some years, it may stay the same, but if any of your wishes change over the course of the year, it's best to get everything updated ASAP.



Record Summer Air Travel Has Begun--What it means for fares and delays



Summer is here! That means... nearly everyone you know is traveling. After the novel pandemic, Americans have flooded airports with the need to see the world. This has been great for the tourism industries--but what about the airline industry and the process of traveling itself?

Here are the important things you should know if you plan to travel this summer:

TSA Forecasts

Summer air travel is expected to soar in the United States. The Transportation Security Administration screened a high of 2.99 million individuals on Sunday, June 23 – exceeding a record set just weeks earlier on May 24 – and the TSA is forecasting a record-setting July 4 holiday period. Over three million flyers are forecast to be screened on Friday, leading into the Independence Day week.

TSA expects to screen more than 32 million travelers in all between Friday, June 28, and Monday, July 8, a 5.4% year-over-year increase in travel for the holiday.

The record-breaking air traveler numbers come amid airline challenges, from intense regulation, the Boeing safety crises limiting new planes coming to market, air traffic controller "fatigue," extreme weather delays, and rising costs which have hit the carriers' bottom line and compressed margins.

Airports weren't wholly ready for the initial summer rush. Over 6,000 flights were delayed by the evening of Friday, May 24, on the East Coast alone. While there may be enough flights to meet demand, the record travel still pose challenges to airports, airlines, and travelers. For now, the airlines are expressing confidence.

CEO Ed Bastian told CNBC's "Squawk Box" this week that its performance levels are excelling, with the "best first quarter reliability [Delta has] ever seen." (Delta has the best on-time record in the U.S.)

But there will also be the need for coordination. American Airlines CEO Robert Isom told "Squawk Box" the company is making sure to "run the most reliable airline possible," but factors affecting on-time flights vary from weather to air traffic control issues.

Air Traffic, Extreme Weather

The Federal Aviation Administration has found a shortage of up to 3,000 needed air traffic controllers. Last summer, a record-breaking summer for airports, there were air traffic jams and near collisions amid challenges in flight coordination. Based on air traffic patterns and airport density, New York City and Florida are subject to the highest risk of backups.

The massive heatwaves across the U.S. was a peek at the kind of extreme weather that can lead to travel issues. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration expects disruptive weather for the holiday week, with storms across the Midwest and East Coast, and continuing dangerous heat in the Southwest and interior Northeast.

Extreme temperatures cause technical failures that result in delays. High heat creates thin air, which hampers the plane's thrust for takeoff and ascent. That means airplanes need more runway for takeoff or a lighter aircraft – by removing baggage or passengers. And it means that very high temperatures increase the risk of flight cancellations. The best bet to avoid this risk is to take early morning and late-night flights.



CONTINUED ON P.7

CONTINUED**Goods News to Reduce Travel Anxiety**

If travelers prepare and secure backup plans, they can make the best out of the busy summer season. And despite travel anxiety and a cascade of uncertain factors, travel expert and managing editor at The Points Guy, Clint Henderson, says airlines and airports are so far showing signs of being better prepared than past years.

Despite May issues and despite some airlines pulling back on overall hiring plans compared to past years, in part due to Boeing delays, Henderson said, "We have not seen the major meltdowns that we saw a couple of years ago. And I think part of the reason for that is the airlines and the airports, and everyone from Uber to rental car companies, you know, you name it, everyone staffed back up."

United Airlines has projected a 7% increase in flyers from the 2023 Independence Day week, and is adapting with new staff. American Airlines is slated for 10% more summer departures year over year.

Improvements in coordination for air traffic controllers are also taking place. "The federal government and local ATC towers have been working together better, and that includes the military. They've opened up military airspace to help accommodate the crowd, so we have seen snarls," Henderson said. "There is still a shortage of air traffic controllers, but it hasn't led to the worst outcomes that we were expecting when we were talking about the shortage of air traffic control workers even a year ago."

That being said, he warns that in severe weather, a shortage of air traffic control may still worsen delays for travelers.

Tips for Independence Day Travel

With lower-than-expected prices, many more flyers this summer are infrequent flyers, who should start by signing up for airline apps which may offer them some introductory benefits, starting with miles and extending to free Wi-Fi on some flights.

Henderson said the easiest ways to save hours of wait times include signing up for programs that offer passengers faster movement through security, including TSA PreCheck and Clear, as well as the no-application-required Mobile Passport Control app, which allows users to go through an expedited U.S. Customs lane.

He also recommended the "Flighty" tracker app, or similar flight tracker, to stay on top of options in the event flight status changes. Flyers need to also stay on top of the routes that the planes they plan to take are already traveling on, to catch issues at other airports which could ultimately cause a cascade of cancellations.

"If your flight gets canceled, you're competing with all those people on that plane to get on the next available flight. So if you have a head start on those people, you're going to be the winner," Henderson said. When it comes to traveling during peak season, "Information is power," he said.

Cheaper fares may not be here to stay

Airfares are down, but many factors influence price, from the specific destination of a traveler, with wide variation in prices depending on route, to how far in advance tickets are purchased, midweek travel versus weekend dates, and what additional fees (e.g. baggage) may push up the total cost of travel significantly.

In addition, with issues lingering in the supply of new planes, from Boeing production being curtailed by the FAA to Airbus running into supply chain snafus, the recent dip in fares may not last too long. Henderson eventually expects price hikes from airlines related to increasing maintenance costs and reduced fleet capacity.

Labor costs and fuel costs per flight skyrocketed in the past year. With production delays, airlines pay billions to fly less fuel-efficient and more costly and aged jets. Technical issues are more common on older plans and increase delays as well.

On June 26, Southwest Airlines cut its second-quarter revenue forecast while citing booking concerns. The firm announced a decline in expected revenue per seat per mile, and fuel costs increasing up to 7.5% year over year.

But for now, even with rising costs, flight prices have yet to return to their summer 2023 peaks, and consumers are taking advantage. Henderson said many last-minute travel deals that airlines are offering this summer are still available. Even if the security lines are long, prices on many routes should not weigh travelers down. Hopefully, neither will delays and cancellations.

Are Painkillers Safe? -- A layperson's guide



Pain can be short-term (acute) or long-lasting (chronic). Some painkillers are strong and need a doctor's prescription. Others are available over-the-counter and can be safely chosen with the help of a pharmacist. Everyone's pain is different, so talking to a healthcare provider is the key to choosing the right pain relief.

Types of Painkillers and Their Risks

There are many types of medicines that help take away pain. Opioids are the most commonly known, but others include medications that also treat seizures, depression, and inflammation. Let's take a brief look at the different kinds of medicines you can use to stop pain.

Opioids

Opioids are the strongest painkillers available. They are best used for short-term pain relief for about 3-7 days after an injury, major burn, or surgery. Opioids for long-term use are typically reserved for cancer pain, severe long-term pain, or pain at the end of life.

If your doctor decides an opioid is needed for a longer time, they may send you to a pain medicine specialist. They can create a safe treatment plan for you. Opioids work by attaching to nerve cells in the brain, spinal cord, or other parts of the body and block pain signals to the brain.

Taking opioid medicines for a long time can make your body get used to them. This means you might need to take more of them to feel better. Research has also found that using these medicines for a long time might even make your pain worse.

Some common prescription opioids include:

- Codeine
- Morphine
- Hydrocodone
- Oxycodone
- Oxymorphone
- Fentanyl

Using opioids for pain relief can cause problems like:

- Nausea
- Constipation
- Low energy
- Slowed breathing
- Slowed heartbeat
- Allergic reaction
- Addiction
- Overdose

Using alcohol or sedatives, such as diazepam or alprazolam, along with opioids can increase your risk of overdose. It's best to discuss any history of substance use disorder with your doctor before starting opioid treatment.

If, during opioid treatment, you start to think you need more medicine to treat your pain, this could be a red flag. Talk to your doctor about this symptom right away.

Seizure Medications

Seizure medications work by blocking pain signals from damaged nerves. This class of drugs can be used for long periods of time under the care of a doctor. However, if you need to stop an anti-seizure medication, you will need to wean off slowly to prevent withdrawal seizures.

Some examples of seizure medicines used to treat nerve pain are:

- Carbamazepine
- Topiramate
- Oxcarbazepine
- Gabapentin
- Pregabalin
- Zonisamide

CONTINUED

These drugs are typically used to treat pain from migraine headaches, damaged nerves, and overly sensitive nerves in trigeminal neuralgia and fibromyalgia. The side effects of using anti-seizure drugs as painkillers are:

- Low energy
- Weight loss or gain
- Inability to think clearly
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision

Some seizure medicines, such as gabapentin and pregabalin, carry the risk of addiction or overdose. Most doctors will prescribe other medications before prescribing those with a risk of addiction.

These drugs may also cause drug interactions and serious side effects such as blood disorders, blood chemistry problems, allergic reactions, and possible suicidal thoughts or actions.

Antidepressants

Antidepressants work in the brain to raise your natural levels of feel-good substances called serotonin and noradrenaline. These brain chemicals can stop pain messages from going to our brain from our spine. So, when the brain gets fewer pain messages, long-lasting pain feels milder.

Antidepressants commonly used for pain caused by migraines, nerve damage, and fibromyalgia include:

- Amitriptyline
- Nortriptyline
- Venlafaxine
- Duloxetine
- Milnacipran

The side effects of using antidepressants as painkillers are:

- Increased suicidal thoughts and actions
- Drowsiness
- Dry mouth
- Blurred vision
- Increased blood pressure
- Weight gain or loss
- Anxiety
- Constipation
- Difficulty sleeping



These medicines can be used for the long term under a doctor's care. If you need to stop an antidepressant used for pain, your doctor will need to slowly decrease your medication to prevent sensitivity to pain and withdrawal symptoms.

Corticosteroids

Corticosteroids, also called steroids, are synthetic hormones that reduce pain by reducing inflammation symptoms such as:

- Tenderness
- Swelling
- Redness or darkened skin
- Soreness

Corticosteroids are not like the steroids bodybuilders use but are similar to the hormones made in our adrenal gland that help regulate metabolism, physical stress, and immune system functions. Common corticosteroids used to help with inflammation pain are:

- Prednisone
- Methylprednisolone
- Dexamethasone

Doctors may give these as infusions, injections, or pills. They are helpful to treat swollen joints, injured muscles or tendons, or an over-active immune system. Being that corticosteroids can suppress your immune system, damage bones, and impede your body's ability to combat physical stress, they are best used only for short-term pain relief. Examples of short-term uses include pinched sciatic nerve, swollen joints, or a flare-up of lupus or rheumatoid arthritis.

CONTINUED ON P.10

CONTINUED**Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs**

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) help to lessen swelling and soreness in the body, just like steroids do. However, they do not affect your adrenal gland.

NSAIDs work by stopping the action of an inflammation-causing enzyme called cyclooxygenase. This type of swelling is common in injured joints, muscle strains, backaches, and bruises. NSAIDs can also treat fever, headaches, menstrual pain, and toothaches.

NSAIDs have other benefits. They are available over the counter (OTC) in pills, oral liquids, and topical rubs or patches. Also, in certain conditions, such as gout or rheumatoid arthritis, doctors can safely prescribe them for long-term use.

NSAIDs available OTC include:

- Ibuprofen
- Naproxen
- Topical salicylates
- Topical diclofenac

Common prescription NSAIDs are:

- Diclofenac
- Celecoxib
- Indomethacin
- Meloxicam

Although NSAIDs do not cause problems with your adrenal gland, they can have side effects ranging from minor to serious:

- Skin rash
- Stomach upset
- Heartburn
- Increased blood pressure
- Bleeding or bruising
- Stomach ulcers
- Kidney damage
- Heart and circulation damage
- Allergic reactions

Long-term use of NSAIDs is best under a doctor's care who will monitor blood work for bleeding or kidney damage. This class of drugs can also have serious drug interactions and cause problems in persons with heart problems, asthma, bleeding disorders, or low kidney function. Aspirin is considered an NSAID, but aspirin has much more risk of side effects, and long-term use is not a safe option.

Acetaminophen

Acetaminophen, also known as paracetamol, Tylenol, or APAP, is a painkiller that blocks the effects of cyclooxygenase like NSAIDs do, but only in the brain and spinal cord. So, it works by blocking pain signals coming into the brain.

Acetaminophen is good for treating pain without inflammation or swelling, such as tension headaches, sore throat, minor cuts or burns, and joint pain from worn-out cartilage (osteoarthritis). You can buy acetaminophen easily without a prescription, and it comes in different forms, such as pills, liquids, and suppositories. It is fine for most people to use acetaminophen occasionally according to label instructions.

However, just because acetaminophen is available OTC doesn't make it completely safe. If acetaminophen is used long term, it should be done under a doctor's care so they can monitor for side effects. These include:

- Rash
- Allergic reactions
- Kidney damage
- Liver damage

It is important to stay within the dose limits in the package directions. Always track how much acetaminophen you take in 24 hours, and double-check directions. Taking too much acetaminophen can cause permanent liver damage and death.

The use of alcohol with acetaminophen can also lead to liver failure and death. Acetaminophen overdose is a medical emergency, and if this occurs, you should call 911 or your local medical emergency contact.

Bottom Line

Remember, no one should have to endure pain without relief. You have so many options to choose from, such as CBD oils for pain relief. It's always important to use these medicines wisely and safely. Before you or a family member takes any painkiller, always check with a doctor or pharmacist first.

If you need to use pain medication, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about safe alternatives to opioids, steroids, or certain seizure medicines. Seek alternative therapies such as chiropractic care, physical and massage therapy, or acupuncture. Pain has many sides and may require multiple different treatment methods.

Who is a Likely Scam Victim? It may not be who you think...



If you think you aren't at risk of being scammed, then you're likely at risk of being a victim. Anyone can be caught in a financial scam, but some people are in greater peril than others. The most vulnerable people are not those most people would expect; especially the potential targets themselves.

People think of the stereotypical financial fraud victim as a frail elderly person living alone who probably has reduced cognitive functions. The fact is that type of person is likely to be a victim of financial abuse, usually by a caretaker or relative. Financial abuse is different from fraud. Research done in the last few years, including a study sponsored by AARP, indicates fraud victims are far from that stereotype. The research presents both a profile of those most likely to be scammed and also the times when each of us is most vulnerable.

A key to remember is that if you believe you aren't likely to be scammed, then you're at greater risk than others.

The most likely financial fraud victims are men aged 70 and over. Also, the more of a risk-taker a person is, the more likely he or she is to be scammed. The victims also tend to view money and wealth as signs of success. To them, acquiring wealth is an important achievement in life.

The likely victim also welcomes investment sales pitches. Even after being scammed, they continue to be open to and even seek new and unconventional investment opportunities, sometimes reasoning that they need to make up their previous losses.

Likely victims also are especially attracted to unregulated investments and those that others don't seem to know about or have access to. Plus, they're attracted to promises of higher returns and other exaggerations.

The likely victims also have some habits that signal to con artists that they are potential targets. They are more likely to receive and to entertain unsolicited telephone calls, mail and email regarding investment opportunities. They tend to trade in their portfolios more frequently than others.

People who are swindled tend to be very comfortable doing business with strangers and people who make unsolicited contact with them. Most frauds depend on people being willing to invest with a stranger, often someone they never meet and have contact with only through the telephone, mail, or email. It's true that some headline-making scams were perpetrated by someone well-known to the victims, sometimes known as affinity frauds. Most frauds, however, don't make headlines. Most cons are run by people who often don't meet their victims or even talk to them over the telephone.

The more of these qualities you have, the more likely you are to be swindled at some time. The most important factors appear to be strong self-confidence, an attraction to or high-tolerance for risk, and a willingness to consider investment ideas from all sources. Fraud victims tend to be attractive to unregulated investments and are open to unsolicited investment offerings that are brought to them through the mail, email or telephone.

If you have several of these traits, you should reconsider your investment behavior or increase your safeguards against fraud. For example, you might want to review any investments with a financial advisor or trusted friend before committing to them.

One other factor makes an older person more susceptible to fraud, and that's emotions.

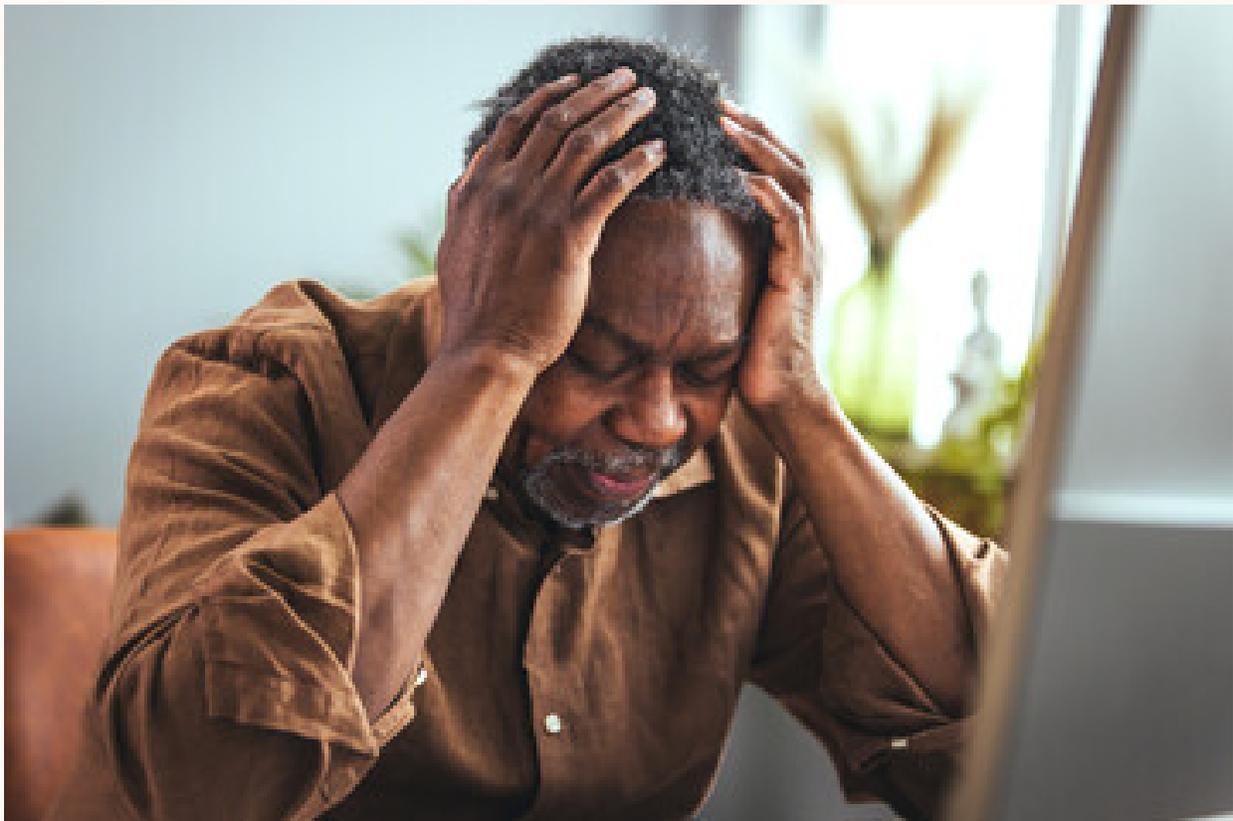
CONTINUED

Con artists work to trigger emotional reactions among potential victims. Older people are more susceptible to fraud when emotions are high than younger people are. It doesn't matter whether the emotion is positive or negative (excitement or anger). A heightened level of emotion is more likely to lead to bad money decisions among older people. Emotions tend to have no effect on whether or not younger people fell for frauds.

The bottom line is there are two keys to avoiding fraud.

The first key is to be aware of your emotional state. When you realize that a sales pitch is triggering excitement, anger or some other emotion, slow down. You don't want to make a financial decision when emotions are elevated. Be suspicious of any financial pitch that's trying to charge your emotions, especially if you're being pressured to act quickly.

The second key is to seek opinions from people you know and trust. If you don't have a long-time financial advisor, you should have friends or relatives who have some knowledge of and common sense about money. Ask what they think about the idea.



Climate Change and Rising Temps



Climate change is driving dangerous heat waves across the Northern Hemisphere this week and will continue to deliver dangerous weather for decades to come, research shows. It is a worldwide heat wave that we are now suffering. That puts the heat under our decisions," said Christiana Figueres, a former U.N. climate agency chief.

Here's how climate change is pushing heat to new extremes.

HOW IS CLIMATE CHANGE DRIVING HEAT?

As the continued burning of fossil fuels releases more carbon emissions to the atmosphere, the air can trap more heat from the sun – causing the average global temperature to rise over time.

Already, the global average temperature has risen nearly 1.3 degrees Celsius (2.3 degrees Fahrenheit) since the start of the Industrial Revolution, when Western countries began burning coal and other fossil fuels.

That higher baseline means climate change is already making all heat waves hotter than they would have been without atmospheric warming. They are also becoming more frequent overall – and more dangerous. Any significant heat wave "has been made substantially more likely and warmer than it otherwise would have been as a result of human-caused climate change," UCLA climate scientist Daniel Swain told reporters earlier this month.

HOW MUCH OF A FACTOR IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

Beyond global warming, there are other factors and conditions that can affect heat waves. Climate systems such as El Nino or La Nina can have a big impact, along with regional circulation patterns.

Land cover can also play a role, with dark surfaces and built environments tending to get hotter than reflective white surfaces or than natural systems like forests or wetlands. To find out exactly how much climate change influenced a specific heat wave, scientists conduct "attribution studies".

They have conducted hundreds of these studies over the last decade by running computer simulations to compare today's weather systems with how they might have behaved if humans had not changed the atmosphere's chemistry over the last century.

For example, scientists with World Weather Attribution have determined that the dangerous heat across South Asia in April was 45 times more likely to have occurred thanks to climate change. During that heat wave, thermometers in the northeast Indian city of Kolkata hit 46 C (115 F) – a full 10 degrees higher than the seasonal average.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

Even if all carbon emissions were halted today, the world has already emitted enough to ensure that climate change will continue to push temperatures upward for decades.

The world must cut emissions in half from 1995 levels by 2030 – and to net-zero by 2050 – to have a chance of keeping the average global temperature rise to around 1.5 C (2.7 F) above the preindustrial average, according to scientists with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Instead, global emissions have only gone up since 1995. The world is currently on track to reach 2.7 C (4.9 F) by 2100, blowing past the 1.5 C (2.7 C) threshold beyond which scientists predict catastrophic and irreversible climate impacts.

The fact that millions of people "in the United States being subjected to unprecedented heat waves is indicative of the fact that we have yet to address the worst of climate change," Figueres told Reuters on Thursday.

What's in Your Baby Wipes?



Whether you are a parent, grandparent, or caregiver, baby wipes are essential if changing diapers is part of your daily routine. But how much do you really know about what's in those wipes touching your or your baby's sensitive skin? Consumer Reports takes a close look at the ingredients and reveals the popular brands that may pose a risk to your baby and the planet. If you have small children, there's a good chance you have baby wipes stashed just about everywhere. Whether you're using wipes for diaper changes, removing makeup, or cleaning sticky fingers, you want them to be safe for people and the planet.

Consumer Reports teamed up with the independent organization Made Safe to investigate the long list of ingredients. Of the 15 brands of baby wipes they looked at, 7 had concerning or unclear ingredients. The wipes contain potentially harmful chemicals, including some that may be linked to cancer risks. Many are made of plastics that don't break down in the environment. In addition, some brands have a low pH balance, which may irritate the skin.

CR reached out to the companies. Coterie and Costco said they use very small amounts of certain chemicals in their wipes as preservatives or skin conditioning agents. Pampers said their ingredients and products undergo rigorous safety testing.

Consumer Reports says some better, biodegradable choices that aren't too expensive include Healthybaby, The Honest Company, Caboo, and WaterWipes wipes.

Some tips when shopping for wipes: avoid potentially harmful chemicals, opt for plant-based biodegradable wipes, and go fragrance-free.

When storing wipes, heating them in a wipe warmer may seem like a good idea, but it can be a breeding ground for bacteria. The FDA says temperature extremes, like those in hot cars, can change the ingredients in wipes, breaking down the preservatives that protect against bacteria and mold and allowing bacteria to grow faster in warm conditions.

Welcome one of our credit union partners!

As a nonprofit consumer education organization, ACC has developed partnerships with credit unions across the country. These partnerships allow ACC members eligibility with our credit unions. If approved, our members gain access to a member-owned financial institution, with products and services designed to make banking more affordable, simple and convenient, and to offer additional resources that can help our members identify and achieve their financial dreams.

LOGIX Federal Credit Union
100 N 1st St.,
Burbank, CA 91502
+++



Welcome to smarter banking

About us?

Well, more than 96% of our members say they would recommend us to their friends and 65% of our new business is referred.

We offer financial services like a bank, but we're not-for-profit so we don't act like one.

Maybe that's all you need to know about us. Then again, you wouldn't have clicked here if you weren't the curious type. We like that about you.

Here's what makes Logix a smarter choice in banking...

We have a proud history

Logix was founded as the Lockheed Aircraft Employees Federal Credit Union in 1937. These historic ties will always be part of our legacy, and a great source of pride. Learn more about our proud [Lockheed Legacy](#).

Our owners might surprise you

Logix is banking with a twist: "customers" become members and part-owners when they open an account here. Our profits are returned to them in the form of better rates, lower fees, improved services, and increased reserves to maintain our unmatched financial strength.

People love us

Not sure about us yet? That's understandable - after all, we just met. But instead of telling you why we're great, just let our members do the talking. We have 4 and 5 star ratings wherever you look across nearly 15,000 online reviews.

We care about our communities

Logix believes in supporting the communities we serve! Employees and members alike participate in opportunities to make a difference. Logix Community Stars Foundation supports local charities through donations and volunteerism.

...and they care about us, too!

Name a community we serve, and odds are we've probably won a local "Best of" rankings year after year. Whether it's San Gabriel Valley, San Fernando Valley, Antelope Valley, or the Santa Clarita Valley, our members make their voices heard about the best banking option in town. See the numerous Awards & Recognitions Logix has received throughout the years.

Your money is safe here

Your deposits are federally insured up to \$250,000 by the National Credit Union Administration. We've maintained a perfect record of positive earnings since 1937 and hold a 5-Star rating for financial strength from Bauer Financial.

It's hard to explain...

Maybe you're one of those people who learns by doing. We get it. The rest is hard to explain anyway. We hope you'll consider opening an account so you can learn first-hand why people love banking with Logix. Open your account today at any Logix [branch](#), [online](#), or by giving us a call at **(800) 328-5328**.

Welcome one of our credit union partners!

As a nonprofit consumer education organization, ACC has developed partnerships with credit unions across the country. These partnerships allow ACC members eligibility with our credit unions. If approved, our members gain access to a member-owned financial institution, with products and services designed to make banking more affordable, simple and convenient, and to offer additional resources that can help our members identify and achieve their financial dreams.

ENT Credit Union
123 S. Weber St.,
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
+++



Official Banking Partner of the Denver Broncos

Since 1957, Ent has improved the financial lives of our owner-members with education, better rates, lower fees and access to the highest quality financial products

Happy employees = happy members

Great benefits. A member-first culture. Annual winner of workplace awards. It's pretty simple: Make our employees happy and they'll do the same for our members. We believe in happy.

A part of Colorado for more than 65 years

Founded in 1957 to meet the financial needs of Ent Air Force Base, we have since expanded to serve communities all along the Front Range. Today, we're more than 500,000 members strong and have more than 50 service centers.

Commitment to service

Our mission comes from a foundation based in service. Established in 1957 to serve the former Ent Air Force Base in Colorado Springs, Ent has since expanded to 21 counties along the Front Range. We're now more than 500,000 members strong with 50+ service centers and more opening soon.

Giving back

The service we provide to Colorado extends beyond our owner-members to the communities where we live, work and play. Every year, we donate money and time to help improve our communities and the lives of the people who live there.

Our members

With Ent, you're not a customer. You're an owner-member. Our goal is to build long-lasting relationships to improve your financial well-being. We deliver value to our owner-members by offering higher dividends on savings, decreased rates on loans and lower to no fees for services.

Honored to be awarded

Every day we strive to provide our members with extraordinary service while creating a work environment that puts employees first. Those efforts are frequently recognized and honored by organizations and media outlets in Colorado and beyond.

Feel secure with Ent

With assets totaling more than \$9B, we provide our members with broad banking security.

For more information, visit our website at www.ent.com or call us toll-free at [1\(719\) 574-1100](tel:17195741100).



ACC Wrap Up

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CONSUMER COUNCIL



Green C Certification

If your company or organization would like to increase its credibility with consumers, you should consider applying for ACC's **"Green C" Certification**.

Applications for the Fall cycle are being accepted through October 31, 2024.

It's a proven fact that consumers prefer to do business with eco-friendly companies, implement green initiatives and that practice Corporate Social Responsibility. The process is straight-forward, and all applicants are recognized by the ACC and the Green USA Institute.

All applicants should review the criteria, then complete and submit their applications to ACC's Green Consumer Council for review, assessment and feedback. Program details and the Green C Certification criteria can be viewed online at www.AmericanConsumerCouncil.org/education.

For more information, call 1-800-544-0414 or visit ACC's website.

Friend of the Consumer

Is your business consumer-friendly?

Does your business deserve greater recognition for its service to consumers?

If so, you should apply for the American Consumer Council's Friend of the Consumer Award.



Each year, ACC awards numerous "Friend of the Consumer" awards to deserving manufacturers, retailers, and other businesses that produce or sell products in the United States, and which meet or exceed federally mandated standards, and have "demonstrated a commitment to American consumers by providing products or services that foster consumer confidence and market acceptance."

To apply, complete the online application at: www.americanconsumercouncil.org/awards.asp and return it to ACC with the application fee.

Applicants will be notified within five days of receipt of their application. Thereafter, a panel of independent judges will review your application and make a formal recommendation within 20 days of your submission.



Financial Education

ACC is pleased to have a partnership with Nicole Middendorf. Nicole is a money maven, a knowledge junkie, and a born coach. She is an entrepreneur who left Morgan Stanley in 2003 to run her own wealth management firm. Nicole is the author of five books, a world traveler, philanthropist, and an accomplished public speaker.

As a Wealth Advisor and Certified Divorce Financial Analyst with Prosperwell Financial, her main focus is to help people create wealth from the inside out. She is able to accomplish this through one-on-one client meetings, writing books, presenting at conferences, and appearing on TV, radio, and other media.

Nicole shares financial advice and a real-life perspective on saving, planning, and investing with audiences across the country. Her primary goal is to take complicated subjects and make them easy to understand. She works hard to empower her audience to make crucial and positive changes in their own lives. Nicole's books have received local and national press coverage, where she has become known for her thoughtful concise quotes, relaxed on-air presence, and articulate delivery.

ACC is committed to promoting and providing financial education to the public. Nicole Middendorf has collaborated with us to create a new 6-part video series that promotes financial literacy for youth. Check it out here: <https://qcashfinancial.com/are-we-failing-our-kids-in-financial-literacy/>

— — — — —
ACC
PO Box 503016
San Diego, CA 92150-3016.
Info@americanconsumercouncil.org