



RETIREMENT RESEARCH & INSIGHTS

Women, money, confidence—A lifelong relationship

Investing attitudes and the path to financial independence

Investing is an important strategy in helping women build wealth to support their longer lifespans and goals for the future. However, a recent Bank of America study, *Women, money, confidence—A lifelong relationship*, reveals women often lack confidence with investing and related decisions that can affect their long-term financial health.

Among women participating in the study, 48% say they feel confident about managing their finances yet only 28% feel empowered. Women cite a lack of knowledge as one of the key factors holding them back from being more involved with investing.

These findings suggest a need for ongoing education and guidance to help women develop investing confidence and skills to take the next steps on their financial journeys. And women are poised for action, with 1 in 5 saying it is time for a change. Women are increasingly more comfortable having financial conversations and are interested in financial education and finding trusted sources of advice. Younger women especially show greater confidence in talking about their finances, which could signal a positive outlook for future generations of women.

The following results from the study highlight key issues around women and investing and point to actions that can help support women as they move forward on the path to financial equality and independence.

Nearly one-third of women say their biggest financial regret is not saving or investing sooner.

Source for all data: Ipsos survey. Bank of America, 2022.

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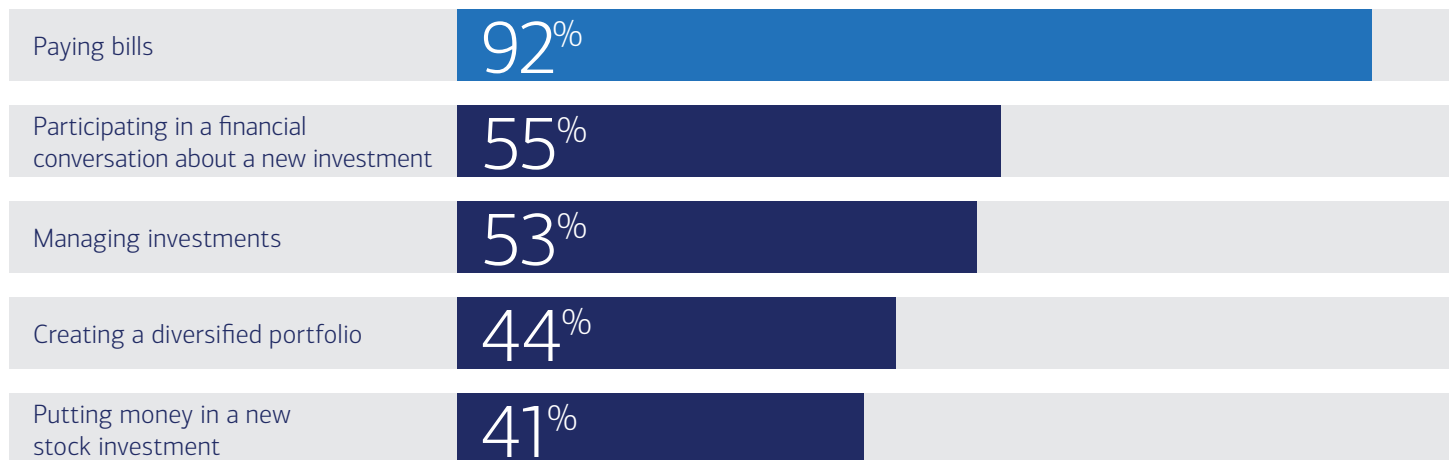
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Women are more confident with everyday financial tasks and less confident with investing

While a clear majority of women say they are confident doing everyday financial tasks, like paying bills and managing a budget, far fewer are confident making longer term financial decisions and other investment-related decisions that can affect their financial futures.

Women who are confident...



 **60% of younger women (ages 22-39) and 60% of Asian American women say they feel confident in managing investments. Both these groups of women are also overall more comfortable in making investment-related decisions than other demographics of women.**



A lack of knowledge about investing can prevent women from making important decisions about their future

Investing can be a strategy to help women reach their long-term financial goals. However, at least 4 out of 10 women struggle with investing and how to build wealth for their future.

Lack of investing knowledge and perceptions that investing is too risky are some of the obstacles preventing women from investing. Hispanic women (37%) are slightly more likely to cite both lack of knowledge and access to financial advice as factors keeping them from investing.

These findings highlight an opportunity for women to consult reliable sources of information to learn more about investing, including risk/reward trade-offs and diversification strategies to help them better understand investment risk.

1 in 3

women don't feel they have the knowledge to be more involved in investing.

Top obstacles deterring women from investing:

No investable savings (38%)

Lack of investing knowledge (32%)

Investing is too risky (22%)

Not having self confidence (18%)

Not having financial source of advice (14%)

When making financial decisions, women rely on their intuition (41%), their own research (41%) or advice from a financial professional (32%), who can provide the objectivity and expertise that they lack.

Women are looking for reliable sources of information and advice to help with investing

Women of all ages and ethnicities say they feel confident talking with a financial advisor, while younger women (ages 22-39) are more comfortable having financial conversations in general. However, 55% of women say they have never worked with an advisor, and only 11% of Black/African American work with one. Whether women seek out advisors could have more to do with money than confidence. Very few women who have less than \$50,000 in investable assets have an advisor, which may indicate that women perceive “financial planning” and “wealth management” to be activities only for the wealthy.

Other resources women turn to for help with investment decisions include financial websites and technology-based solutions. Not surprisingly, younger women prefer technology-based resources while older women shy away from them.



44% of women see a financial advisor as a key resource to help them with investment decisions.

Almost 7 out of 10 women are comfortable with the idea of talking one-on-one with a financial advisor.

53% of women say it's easier to talk to other women about their finances.

Caucasian and Asian women are more likely than other groups of women to rely on a financial advisor to make investment decisions—and are also more likely to have a long-term financial plan.

Actions to consider



- **Prioritize building knowledge**—from basic finances to a focus on investing—whether through online resources, educational books/publications, or talking to a financial professional.
- **Make the most of available programs**, for example, join an investment club, register for an education seminar, or participate in an employee networking group for women.
- **Consider the advantages of working with a financial advisor** to get professional guidance and personalized strategies to plan, save and invest for the future.
- **Take advantage of employer benefits** to get started investing, such as a 401(k) retirement plan or using the investment feature of a Health Savings Account (HSA).
- **Seek out guidance and tools** to help calculate how much might be needed in retirement, which can help determine overall saving and investing goals. Modeling different scenarios in Merrill’s [personal retirement calculator](#) can help illustrate the benefits of starting to save and invest early.
- **Connect with female financial role models** who can share their experience on investing and building wealth and inspire next steps toward financial well-being.



What would women do differently?

Start saving/
investing sooner 44%

Invest more of
their money 26%

Educate themselves
more about money 23%

About this study

Methodology

Ipsos conducted a 21-minute online survey among a representative sample of more than 3,500 women and more than 1,200 men age 22+ in February 2022. Quotas were enforced to ensure results were representative within gender by age, race, income and assets, marital status, employment status, and education. Survey content was developed by Ipsos in consultation with the Bank of America team. Bank of America, Merrill, their affiliates, and advisors are not affiliated with Ipsos.

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