

## It's Time for Your Credit Check-up

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Although I work in a financial industry, I have to remind myself to get a “credit check-up”, much like I have to remind myself to do a medical check-up at least once a year. It's actually a good idea to check your credit at least 2 or 3 times a year and easy to remember to do so if you time it with specific calendar events to help remind you, such as the beginning of a season, or a particular holiday. I use the start of Fall, Valentine's Day, and my birthday which is in June. Use whatever works for you, but do take the time to perform a routine check on your credit.

The easiest way to do so is to access your own personal credit report is to use the government's website created for this purpose, which is [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com). You'll be asked specific questions that only you will know the answers to, as a precaution against just anyone logging onto this site and randomly checking credit on people. There are three national bureaus, and you can check each bureau once each year for free, so you could stagger your inquiries at three different times of the year and check one of the three bureaus and still monitor the data on your credit report without having to pay a fee for the information.

Doing a routine check every 3-4 months should be able to help you spot any areas of concern. If someone is using your identity to obtain credit, you can see new accounts that you know you didn't open. Likewise, if one of your creditors is reporting inaccurate information, you can contact them while it's relatively recent and request corrective action without a lot of research since that information should be relatively handy if it's occurred in the last 4-6 months.

You can also monitor your progress on any attempts to build credit, or resolve issues on your credit, as well as head off any potential identity theft issues. In today's technologically advanced society, the chance of having your identity breached is occurring with more frequency. Being pro-active and monitoring the data on your personal credit report is a responsible thing to do. It's sometimes a painful thing to do, especially if you start experiencing financial difficulties or hate being reminded of past problems that have had a negative impact on your credit.

But in much the same way as a medical check-up, doing a routine, periodic credit check-up is just one of those necessary evils. It's not difficult, and it doesn't take much time, unless you have issues that surface and need your attention to resolve. But the time it takes to resolve those problem areas is much less if you catch them in a timely manner – again, just like your routine periodic medical check-up. So my calendar shows that Fall is here, and for me, that means it's time for my credit check-up. It is time for yours?