



## Making The Switch: 8 Easy Steps to Switching Financial Institutions.

- 1. Choose Your New Account.** Investigate your options; all financial institutions aren't the same, but the products offered within one institution differ as well. What are you looking for? What would benefit you most? Do you want a free checking account? Are you willing to pay a fee or keep a higher balance for an account that bears interest? Are there any other related fees? Benefits? Look into all of these factors and determine what is best for your situation.
- 2. Open Your New Account & Get It Going.** The sooner you get your new account up and running, the better. Put a few dollars in your account (nothing more), just to see what the features and terms of the account look like. Then, within a couple of weeks, your new debit card, checkbook (if you ordered one), and online access should be all set up for you to test. That way when you're ready to make the final move, you'll be all set.
- 3. Identify Your Expenses, Especially Automatic Payments.** Automatic payments are the main reason many people never switch financial institutions, even if they are being fee'd to death. But, making the switch doesn't have to be that difficult. First look over your last couple of statements from the account you are leaving. Identify everything that comes out automatically and when. Once you have that list made, you can ACH transfer from your old account to your new account the funds to cover these payments. Don't transfer all of your money, just the amount to cover your bills that come out automatically. Remember to adjust for amounts that vary month-to-month, like utilities; and of course, always err on the side of caution (meaning: assume your utilities will be slightly more this month, not less).
- 4. Change Your AutoPay Settings** Now that your new account has a sufficient balance to pay them, go into your accounts online (utilities, cable, internet, and anything else you found on your list) to change your bill pay settings to your new account information.
- 5. Update Your Direct Deposit.** Once all of your automatic bills have been redirected, you'll also want your direct deposits moved over too. That is anything that is automatically deposited into your account: think payroll deposits from your employer, child support payments if applicable, social security payments if applicable, etc.

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**6. Don't Forget the Little Stuff.** If you're like most of America, you probably have your iTunes, Amazon, and/or Paypal accounts linked to your debit card or checking account too. These types of linked accounts are easy to forget about because they only pop-up when you make a new purchase; which may not be that often. So, don't forget to go in and link these types of accounts to your new checking account as well.

**7. Keep Your Old Account Open.** The best way to avoid making any mistakes, is to leave a small amount of money in your old account for a couple of months after you think you've switched everything over. There maybe something that is only drafted from your account quarterly or yearly that you may have forgotten about, so this is a great way to avoid accidentally overdrawing.

**8. Finally, CLOSE THE ACCOUNT.** You would not believe the amount of fees that are collected on dormant accounts or those with exceedingly low-balances. Even if you forget about your old account, your former financial institution will not. So, after your two or three month wait period, do not forget to close your account.