

What is Important to You About . . .

Financial ~ Mental ~ Physical ~ Spiritual ~ Social

NEWSLETTER

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"The day you take a step
outside of your comfort
zone is the day your world
will change."

~Steven Aitchison

The markets once again are trading on headlines. The rhetoric from the Trump Administration continues to confound investors as they try to make sense of his tweets and his policies. Virtually every day the markets move up or down based on the latest headline on trade tariffs, immigration news or other political issues. Most recently, investors are looking for guidance from the Federal Reserve in the form of their minutes from their last meeting. This will provide some insight into the plans they have for interest rates and how they plan to keep the economy moving in the right direction. So far markets have held up well enough with the S&P500 up 1.67% year-to-date while the Dow is negative for the year.

The Feds will continue to keep an eye on inflation as they make their interest rate policy decisions. Long dormant in the inflation equation was the stagnate growth in wages. As the unemployment numbers fell through the last several years to the sub 4% rate where they are currently, employers were able to hold off on increasing employee wages. That is no longer the case as the lack of qualified workers is evident in all areas of the economy. Median base pay for workers in the United States climbed by 1.6% in June according to the latest edition of Glassdoor's Local Pay Report. That was the strongest growth in the wage statistic so far in 2018. Those rising costs will undoubtedly cause some headwinds in the market and hopefully increased consumer spending can help offset some of those concerns. Consumer spending which has been improving increased a seasonally 0.2% in May, but that undershot the expectations for a 0.4% rise. Additionally, consumer confidence took an unexpected hit in June. Sentiment over current conditions was level, but consumers' optimism over the future dipped and with consumer spending accounting for around 70% of the US economic activity it clouds the near-term market outlook.

As we enter the late stages of this economic recovery that is now into its second decade, wage pressures will definitely be a drag on corporate earnings. In order to entice the shrinking pool of qualified job seekers, companies will have to increase their job offer package in the form of higher wages, better benefits and other incentives. That will be good for the labor force, but as they have done in the past, companies will simply pass on those higher costs to the consumers. We will undoubtedly see higher ranges for inflation and of course, the Fed's will continue to increase interest rates. As long as those changes are measured and well managed, we should come through the next phase of this recovery just fine.



Understanding the Grieving Process

By Patricia Johnson (www.focusonthefamily.com)

"Grief is a journey, often perilous and without clear direction," writes author Molly Fumia. "The experience of grieving cannot be ordered or categorized, hurried or controlled, pushed aside or ignored indefinitely. It is inevitable as breathing, as change, as love. It may be postponed, but it will not be denied."

Fumia says it well. When it comes to grieving the death of a loved one, there are no linear patterns, no "normal" reactions, no formulas to follow. The word "grief" is derived from the French word "grève," meaning a heavy burden. Indeed, the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual implications can be overwhelming.

While grief is an expected response to a significant loss, the unfamiliar emotions that arise can lead to feelings of helplessness, fear and isolation.

Following a death, everyone works through these stresses differently. Some are instantly devastated; others feel numb and disconnected. Some withdraw socially, while others reach out for support. What's more, just when the initial shock begins to subside, a deeper sense of reality and despair sets in. Those who grieve may need to learn new skills, adopt different habits and adjust to daily life without the physical presence of the person who died.

Although grieving is an individual experience, there are symptoms many people share after suffering personal loss:

- Feels physically drained
- Can't sleep at night
- Forgetful and unable to think clearly
- Noticeable change in appetite
- Physical distress such as chest pains, headaches or nausea
- Stays extremely busy to avoid thinking about his or her grief
- Eats, drinks watches television, etc. excessively
- Participates in harmful activities
- Senses or dreams about the deceased
- Becomes withdrawn, lonely and apathetic
- Frequent sighing and crying

Each person sets his or her own pace when grieving. There will be ups and downs, moments of relief followed by moments of anguish. The first few days after someone dies are generally the most intense, marked by chaos, strong emotions and a "dreamlike" sensation.

Over time, a host of emotions may emerge. From guilt to remorse to anger, reactions vary from person to person. It's not uncommon for grieving loved ones to ask questions like

Why did this happen? Where was God? or Why didn't the doctors find the cancer sooner?

Among those mourning a death, some find the pain diminishes within weeks or months. They arrive at a place of acceptance, peace and hope for the future. They reminisce about their deceased loved one instead of feeling consumed by memories.

For others, the healing process persists and it is difficult to enjoy a reasonable quality of life. Everyday events and significant life markers are painful reminders of what could have been.

If debilitating symptoms continue longer than six months, we suggest seeking professional help. A Christian counselor or therapist can help you release the emotions you may have stored up inside. (Call Focus on the Family at 1-800-A-FAMILY and ask for the counseling department. We can refer you to someone in your area who can help you through this difficult time.)

- The intensity of grief may relate to the following factors:
- Whether the death was sudden or expected
- Your feelings about the person who died
- Your personality, family background, coping style and life experience
- Your belief system and view on death
- How those around you react and support you

The grieving process can be long and isolating, yet it's crucial to accept support rather than grieve alone. Talking about grief is an essential part of healing. Receiving reassurance and feeling understood will help make the recovery process more complete during one of life's most challenging times.

Market Statistics

	6/30/2018 Close	Change YTD
Dow Jones	24,271.41	-1.81%
NASDAQ	7,510.30	8.79%
S&P	2,718.37	1.67%



Smart Ways to Loan Money to Family Members

By Sandra Block (www.kiplinger.com)

Before you loan any cash, follow these steps to help ensure that you'll get your money back.

Whether you're lending money to your college-bound child or your entrepreneurial brother-in-law, treat the loan as a business transaction. That will increase the likelihood that you'll be repaid and keep the IRS at bay.

But first, think hard about whether you can afford to lend the money. "It's an investment," says Curtis Arnold, founder of CardRatings.com and coauthor of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Person-to-Person Lending*. "You can lose the whole kit and caboodle."

Still, a direct loan is less risky than cosigning a loan, says Gerri Detweiler, director of consumer education for Credit.com. If you cosign, you're on the hook if the borrower defaults -- and you may not know about it until your credit rating takes a tumble.

If a family member asks you for a loan, start by asking why he or she needs the money. A loan that would help with college tuition or the purchase of a home could improve the borrower's financial security. Similarly, a loan could help a relative recovering from a financial setback to avoid predatory lenders, Detweiler says. Conversely, lending money to a family member who has a history of poor financial choices could enable more bad behavior. Ask the potential borrower to provide you with a copy of a credit report and score. The score probably isn't stellar, or the family member wouldn't be hitting you up for a loan. But a credit report (the prospective borrower can get one free at www.annualcreditreport.com) will give you an idea of the individual's other financial obligations.

How much to charge. If the borrower is really struggling, you may be tempted to make a no-interest loan, or charge a nominal amount. Be aware, though, that doing so could get you into hot water with the IRS. To avoid having the transaction treated as a gift, the IRS requires that you charge at least the applicable federal rate (AFR), which is published monthly at www.irs.gov. Otherwise, the IRS could dun you for taxes on "imputed" interest income, based on the AFR when the loan was made. You're not required to charge interest if the loan is for less than \$10,000, or up to \$100,000 if the borrower's investment income for the year is less than \$1,000.

Federal rates this year have ranged from about 0.21% to 3.28%, depending on the length of the loan. Of course, you're expected to report interest you receive as taxable income.

If you wind up forgiving the loan, you might be entangled by gift-tax rules. Gifts that exceed \$14,000, including any unpaid interest, require that you file a gift-tax return and cut into your lifetime gift- and estate-tax exemptions.

Put it in writing. In addition to charging interest, drawing up a formal agreement will make it clear to the IRS that you're making a loan, not a gift. It's also a good way to ensure that everyone involved understands the terms of the loan. You can find sample promissory notes online, and Web sites such as www.bankrate.com provide tools that will calculate monthly payments.

Arnold, who has made several loans to friends and family members, uses LoanBack, which sells a personalized loan agreement you can track online. A product that will calculate payments and provide e-mail alerts costs \$29.95; a basic downloadable template (that doesn't do the math for you) is available for \$14.95.

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13. You'll see results. Bodyweight exercises get results partly because they involve compound movements—meaning numerous joints and muscles are engaged in each move. Compound exercises such as push-ups and lunges have been shown to be extremely effective for strength gains and performance improvements. And research shows improved core strength (see No. 5 above) translates to improved strength gains throughout the entire body.

The Takeaway

While there's no universal "best" way to exercise for everyone, bodyweight movements offer lots of benefits, especially if you're new to resistance training. Whether you're at home, at the gym, or even in a hotel room, bodyweight training is one tool that can be helpful to all levels in every setting.

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13 Reasons to Start Bodyweight Training Today

Courtesy of www.greatist-8.com

Getting fit doesn't have to be complicated. Simple bodyweight exercises can be a great choice for achieving gains in strength, flexibility, and overall health. Best of all, they don't cost a thing and you can usually do them just about anywhere. Still not convinced? We've got 13 reasons why bodyweight exercises should be a key component to your workout regime.

1. It's a super-efficient workout. Research suggests high-output, bodyweight-based exercises like plyometrics yield awesome fitness gains in short durations. Since there's no equipment involved, bodyweight workouts make it easy to transition from one move to the next with little rest. And you've probably already heard that those short-but-intense HIIT workouts can yield major results.

2. It can combine cardio and strength training - Performing quick cardio sessions (such as 60 seconds of burpees or high-knees) between strength movements (such as a set of push-ups or lunges) will keep the heart pumping while still encouraging muscle and strength development.

3. You can burn fat—fast. - Just a few minutes of a bodyweight circuit training can have a major impact on the body's metabolism. If you've ever heard of the afterburn effect, you know that even when your workout is over, your body can still be revved for hours to come.

4. At any fitness level, it's challenging. Bodyweight exercises are great because they're easily modified to challenge anyone. Adding extra reps, performing the exercises faster or super slowly, taking shorter breaks, or adding a ballistic movement (like a clap at the top of each push-up) are just a few ways to make the simplest workout tougher. And with each added modification, your progress is obvious.

5. You'll gain core strength. Your core is more than just six-pack abs. In fact, at least twenty-nine muscles make up the trunk of the body, and many simple bodyweight movements can be used to engage all of them. Such exercises won't just give you tighter abs, you'll also gain better posture, relieve lower back stress, and improve overall performance.

6. It can increase your flexibility. Not everyone who does regular resistance training has to end up with tight muscles and inflexible joints. Bodyweight training can go hand-in-hand with building strength and flexibility. Completing bodyweight exercises through a full range of motion ensures your joints are moving freely. Plus, it can

lead to improved posture and might reduce the chance of exercise-related injury. Yoga, the fave no-equipment workout for many, is another great way to improve flexibility while also significantly improving strength.

7. There's never an excuse to not workout. Ask someone why they don't exercise, and chances are they have "no time" or it's "inconvenient." Luckily bodyweight exercises eliminate those common obstacles. When you only need a little space, it's easy to squeeze in workouts wherever you are. Exercising without equipment can also be used as a stress reliever whether you're working at home or on the road.

8. You'll achieve better balance. When it comes to this type of training, sometimes increasing resistance means increasing balance, too. For example, a normal squat can be ramped up by swapping in a single-leg squat (a.k.a. a pistol squat). Functional movements like that one can improve balance through increased body awareness and control.

9. You'll never get bored. It can be easy to get stuck in a workout rut of treadmills, bicep curls, lat pull-downs, and bench presses. That's why bodyweight training can be so refreshing: There are countless exercise variations that can spice up any workout routine. Working with a variety of exercises not only relieves boredom, it can also help break plateaus and spark further progress.

10. Mixing up your workout is easy. Indoor exercise isn't for everyone. Luckily you can do these moves inside or outdoors, alone or with a group of friends. Think about adding some strength moves to your next park run, or finishing a swim session with a quick bodyweight circuit to keep things interesting.

11. It's free. Gym memberships and boutique classes can quickly add up—but bodyweight training is free. Experts cite the low cost of bodyweight training as key to its rise in popularity.

12. It can help with injury prevention. Injury is one of the main reasons people stop working out, so preventing those aches and pains should be a big priority. Bodyweight exercises are generally safe for any exerciser regardless of experience, age, or fitness level. Many simple bodyweight movements can actually be an effective option for rehabilitation, even for those with significant impairments.

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