

# Eight Simple Steps for Balancing your Checkbook

## Do You Fit in One of these Categories?

### A) Nice try, but...

You try to balance your checkbook using pencil and paper, but find it frustrating and have difficulty making the numbers agree.

### B) See No Evil - You avoid the frustration altogether by

1. Ignoring your monthly statement altogether,
2. Using the bank's balance, or
3. Keeping an approximation in your head.

This brochure will help simplify the balancing process and hopefully reduce the anxiety level when your bank statement arrives.

## How Your Bank Statement Works

Seldom will your bank statement and checkbook register agree. But, that is no reason to panic. It's merely a matter of timing.

Your statement lists the transactions posted to or cleared to your account as of the closing date. The closing date is usually found in the upper right-hand corner of the first page of your statement.

Once your statement has closed, it will take a few days for the information to be printed and for it to arrive in the mail. Meanwhile, you are continuing to write checks, make ATM withdrawals and/or deposits, and hopefully, keeping track of these transactions in your checkbook register.

Remember, it also takes a few days for your checks, ATM, Visa Check Card, and/or deposit transactions to be recorded on your account.

## Record, Balance, Repeat

Recording each transaction in your checkbook register and adding or subtracting it from the balance is the first step to simplifying the balancing act.

It's important to record the transaction at the time you actually write the check, make a withdrawal, or make a deposit.

By recording the transactions and balancing your account total in your checkbook register, you'll get a clearer picture of your spending habits and know exactly how much money you have. And, if for some reason you detect a problem, the sooner you can correct it, the better.

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## The Balancing Act

Balancing your checkbook each month within a day or two of receiving your statement will not only reduce your stress level, it will lessen the amount of time it takes to complete the task.

On the back of your monthly statement is a handy form to help you balance. Use it along with the following steps to make balancing a snap.

Before you begin, gather the following:

- Your last two bank statements
- Your checkbook and register
- Any ATM and/or Visa Check Card receipts that you did not record in your checkbook register
- A pencil

## Eight Steps to Balancing

### 1. Record Interest Earned

In your checkbook register, enter all of the interest earned on your account (if applicable). The interest earned will appear on the front of your statement.

Add this balance. Be sure to record any other credit amounts listed, such as bank corrections.

### 2. Record Service Charges, Etc.

In your checkbook register, record any charges that have been subtracted from your account, as shown on your statement. These charges may include:

- Monthly services charges
- Per check charges
- ATM transaction charges
- Non-sufficient Funds fees

### Subtract these charges from your register balance.

Last Checkbook balance	_____
Interest from Statement +	_____
Subtotal	_____
Service Charges from Statement -	_____
"New" Checkbook Balance	_____

