

# Keith Swift

April 2021 Newsletter



**Keith Swift**  
**Financial Advisor/Registered Principal**  
**Raymond James Financial Services**  
420 Madison Street Suite C • Clarksville • TN • 37040  
931-647-1942  
keith.swift@raymondjames.com • <https://www.raymondjames.com/keithswift>

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FINANCIAL SERVICES, INC.  
Member FINRA/SIPC

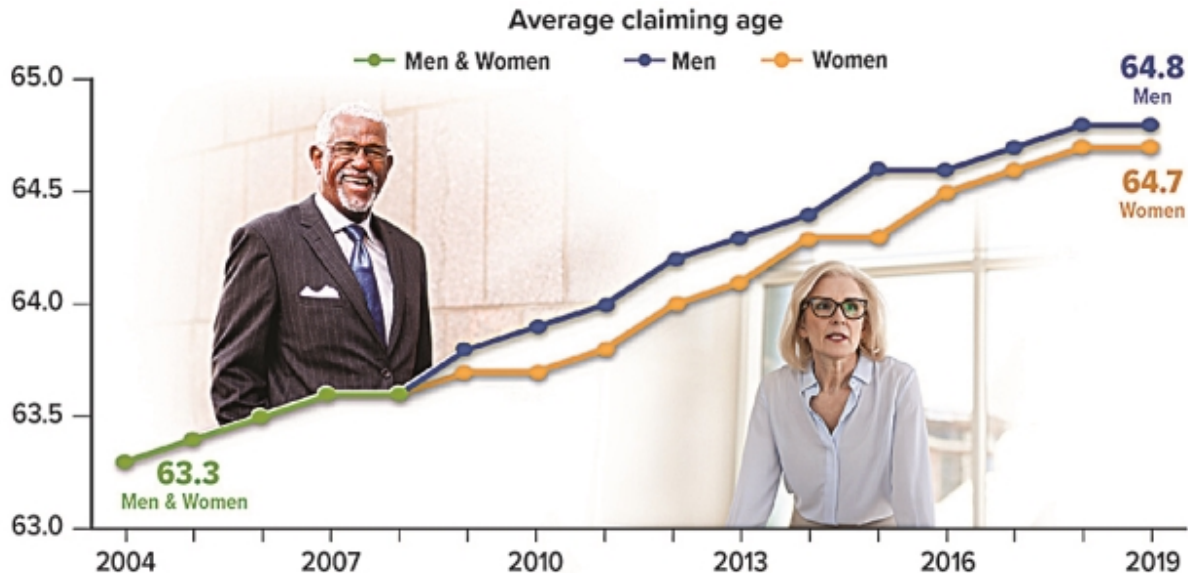
Dear Client and Friend,

If you prefer, you may view this newsletter in PDF format on my website. The address is being provided below. Simply go to the newsletter heading on the website for the link. I trust you will find the information helpful.

Sincerely,  
Keith Swift

## More People Delay Claiming Social Security

The average age for claiming Social Security retirement benefits has been steadily rising. Older Americans are working longer, in part because full retirement age is increasing incrementally from 66 to 67. A worker may begin receiving Social Security retirement benefits as early as age 62, but monthly benefits will be permanently reduced by as much as 30% if claimed before full retirement age — a strong incentive to wait.



Source: Social Security Administration, 2020

# Due Date Approaches for 2020 Federal Income Tax Returns

Tax filing season is here again. If you haven't done so already, you'll want to start pulling things together — that includes getting your hands on a copy of your 2019 tax return and gathering W-2s, 1099s, and deduction records. You'll need these records whether you're preparing your own return or paying someone else to prepare your tax return for you.

Don't procrastinate. The filing deadline for individuals is generally Monday, May 17, 2021.

## Filing for an Extension

If you don't think you're going to be able to file your federal income tax return by the due date, you can file for and obtain an extension using IRS Form 4868, *Application for Automatic Extension of Time to File U.S. Individual Income Tax Return*. Filing this extension gives you an additional five months (to October 15, 2021) to file your federal income tax return. You can also file for an extension electronically — instructions on how to do so can be found in the Form 4868 instructions.

Filing for an automatic extension does not provide any additional time to pay your tax. When you file for an extension, you have to estimate the amount of tax you will owe and pay this amount by the May filing due date. If you don't pay the amount you've estimated, you may owe interest and penalties. In fact, if the IRS believes that your estimate was not reasonable, it may void your extension.

**Note:** *Special rules apply if you're living outside the country or serving in the military and on duty outside the United States. In these circumstances, you are generally allowed an automatic one-month extension (to June 15, 2021) without filing Form 4868, though interest will be owed on any taxes due that are paid after the May filing due date. If you served in a combat zone or qualified hazardous duty area, you may be eligible for a longer extension of time to file.*

## What If You Owe?

One of the biggest mistakes you can make is not filing your return because you owe money. If your return shows a balance due, file and pay the amount due in full by the due date if possible.

If there's no way that you can pay what you owe, file the return and pay as much as you can afford. You'll owe interest and possibly penalties on the unpaid tax, but you'll limit the penalties assessed by filing your return on time, and you may be able to work with the IRS to pay the remaining balance (options can include paying the unpaid balance in installments).

## Expecting a Refund?

The IRS has stepped up efforts to combat identity theft and tax refund fraud. More aggressive filters that are intended to curtail fraudulent refunds may inadvertently delay some legitimate refund requests. In fact, the IRS is required to hold refunds on all tax returns claiming the earned income tax credit or the additional child tax credit until at least February 15.

Most filers, though, can expect a refund check to be issued within 21 days of the IRS receiving a tax return. However, note that in 2020 the IRS experienced delays in processing 2019 paper tax returns due to limited staffing during the coronavirus pandemic.

So if you are expecting a refund on your 2020 tax return, consider filing as soon as possible and filing electronically.

## Due Dates for 2020 Tax Returns



**May 17, 2021**  
**To Do:**  
Most taxpayers must file tax return and pay tax or file for 6-month extension and pay estimated tax

**June 15, 2021\***  
**To Do:**  
Taxpayers living (or serving in the military) outside the U.S. on May 17, 2021, must file tax return and pay tax or file for 4-month extension and pay estimated tax  
\*Interest is due on taxes paid after the May filing date

**October 15, 2021**  
**To Do:**  
Taxpayers who filed for an extension must file tax return and pay any additional tax

# A Financial Wellness Plan Can Help Pave the Road to Retirement

If we've learned any lesson over the past year, it's that no matter how carefully we plan and prepare, we'll likely encounter unexpected hurdles. While a global pandemic has certainly underscored the need to pay close attention to our physical wellness, it has also revealed the need to shore up our financial wellness.

According to PwC's 9th Annual Financial Wellness Survey conducted in January 2020, financial matters were the top cause of stress for employees even well before the pandemic hit in earnest. More than one-third of full-time employed millennials, Gen Xers, and baby boomers had less than \$1,000 in emergency savings. Only 29% of women said they would be able to cover their basic necessities if they found themselves out of work for an extended period, compared with 55% of men. And more than half of millennials and Gen Xers and 35% of baby boomers said they would likely use their retirement funds for something other than retirement, with most noting it would be for an unexpected expense or medical bills.<sup>1</sup>

Although tapping your retirement savings can help you get through a crisis, it can hinder your ability to afford a comfortable retirement. Having a plan to guard your financial wellness throughout your working years can help you avoid putting your retirement at risk.

## What Is Financial Wellness?

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) defines financial well-being as:<sup>2</sup>

- 1) Having control over day-to-day and month-to-month finances. In order to achieve this, your expenses need to be lower than your income.
- 2) Maintaining the capacity to absorb a financial shock. This typically refers to having adequate emergency savings and insurance.

3) Being on track to meet financial goals, meaning you have either a formal or informal plan to meet your goals and you are actively pursuing them.

4) Having the financial freedom to make choices that allow you to enjoy life, such as a splurge vacation.

The CFPB has identified several key factors that contribute to an individual's ability to achieve financial well-being. Among them are: (1) having the skills needed to find, process, and use relevant financial information when it's needed; and (2) exhibiting day-to-day financial behaviors and saving habits.

## Assistance Is Available

Many employers have begun offering financial wellness benefits over the past decade. These programs have evolved from a focus on basic retirement readiness to those addressing broader financial challenges such as health-care costs, general finance and budgeting, and credit/debt management.<sup>3</sup>

If you have access to work-based financial wellness benefits, be sure to take time and explore all that is offered. The education and services can provide valuable information and help you build the skills to make sound decisions in challenging circumstances.

In addition, a financial professional can become a trusted coach throughout your life. A qualified financial professional can provide an objective third-party view during tough times, while helping you anticipate and manage challenges and risks and, most important, stay on course toward a comfortable retirement.

1) PwC, May 2020

2) Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, January 2015

3) Employee Benefit Research Institute, October 2020

## The Four Elements of Financial Well-Being

	Present	Future
Security	Control over your day-to-day, month-to-month finances	Capacity to absorb a financial shock
Freedom of choice	Financial freedom to make choices to enjoy life	On track to meet your financial goals

Source: CFPB, September 2017

# Four Things Investors Should Know About Stock Splits

In 2020, three companies in the S&P 500 index announced plans for stock share splits, down from 102 companies in 1997 and seven in 2016.<sup>1</sup>

As an investor, you may wonder what a stock split is and how it might affect your portfolio. Although splitting stock shares has been much less common in recent years, it's usually newsworthy when a high-profile company announces a planned split.

**1. What is a stock split?** A company may decide to lower the price of its stock by splitting each outstanding share into more than one share. With a traditional stock split, more shares are available, but the total value of all the shares (the company's stock market capitalization) remains the same. For example, if a company announces a 2-for-1 split and you owned one share worth \$100, you would own two shares worth \$50 each.

**2. Why do companies split their stock?** Typically, stock splits occur when the price of individual shares has risen to a level that might discourage potential investors. More affordable share prices are thought to improve the liquidity, or the ease with which shares are bought and sold. Companies may also split stock to show management's confidence in the future performance of the stock, as well as to stir up interest in the stock if it has been languishing.

**3. What is a reverse stock split?** In order to increase the per-share price of a stock, companies might opt for

a reverse stock split, which creates one share from multiple shares. One reason why a company might issue a reverse stock split is to satisfy a stock exchange's minimum share price. By decreasing the number of shares outstanding, the company boosts its stock price. Reverse stock splits could also make a company's stock more appealing to investors who might perceive it as more valuable at a higher stock price.

**4. How do stock splits affect investors?** A common misconception is that splits automatically increase the value of an investor's holdings. In reality, the number of shares owned is increased in proportion to the reduced price per share, so the total value of an investor's holdings remains the same. Stock splits generally have no impact on the broader stock market or the fundamental value of the stock. Some argue that they may potentially pose at least one advantage to shareholders: A stock split draws wider attention to a company's rising share price and the fact that it has been doing well.

*The return and principal value of stocks fluctuate with changes in market conditions. Shares, when sold, may be worth more or less than their original cost. Past performance is not a guarantee of future results.*

1) *The Wall Street Journal*, August 28, 2020

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