



RAYMOND JAMES®

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Market Summary	1
Market Outlook	1
Health and Wealth.....	2
4 Numbers to Know	3
Your Team.....	4

A Closer Look



MARKET SUMMARY

Equity markets around the world continued to climb in June, supported by increased earnings. Domestic, international and emerging markets equity posted positive returns in the second quarter of 2017. Two major U.S. stock indices closed at new highs in June, continuing the new-high trend that began after the presidential election in November 2016.

MARKET OUTLOOK

There are many economic indicators that could improve in July and for the remainder of the year. The stock market generally have been steady through the first half of 2017, despite domestic and global turmoil. Oil prices continue to tumble, driving down energy prices and inflation. The housing market, which had stalled after a strong 2016, may be gaining steam, at least as to increasing home prices. The FOMC meets again in July. If inflation and economic growth continue to show signs of slowing, it is likely the Fed will wait until it meets again in September to consider another rate increase.

THE HEALTH-WEALTH CONNECTION

It's a vicious cycle: Money is one of the greatest causes of stress, prolonged stress can lead to serious health issues, and health issues often result in yet more financial struggles. The clear connection between health and wealth is why it's so important to develop and maintain lifelong plans to manage both.



The big picture

Consider the following statistics:

1. More than 20% of Americans say they have either considered skipping or skipped going to the doctor due to financial worries. (American Psychological Association, 2015)
2. More than half of retirees who retired earlier than planned did so because of their own health issues or to care for a family member. (Employee Benefit Research Institute, 2017)
3. Chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and arthritis are among the most common, costly, and preventable of all health problems. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017)
4. Chronic conditions make you more likely to need long-term care, which can cost anywhere from \$21 per hour for a home health aide to more than \$6,000 a month for a nursing home. (Department of Health and Human Services, 2017)
5. A 65-year-old married couple on Medicare with median prescription drug costs would need about \$265,000 to have a 90% chance of covering their medical expenses in retirement. (Employee Benefit Research Institute, 2017)

Develop a plan for long-term health ...

The recommendations for living a healthy lifestyle are fairly straightforward: eat right, exercise regularly, don't smoke or engage in other risky behaviors, limit soda and alcohol consumption, get enough sleep (at least seven hours for most adults), and manage stress. And before embarking on any new health-related endeavor, talk to your doctor, especially if you haven't received a physical exam within the past year. Your doctor will benchmark important information such as your current weight and risk factors for developing chronic disease. Come to the appointment prepared to share your family's medical history, be honest about your daily habits, and set goals with your doctor.

Other specific tips from the Department of Health and Human Services include:

Nutrition: Current nutritional guidelines call for eating a variety of vegetables and whole fruits; whole grains; low-fat dairy; a wide variety of protein sources including lean meats, fish, eggs, legumes, and nuts; and healthy oils. Some medical professionals are hailing the long-term benefits of the so-called "Mediterranean diet." Details for a basic healthy diet and the Mediterranean diet can be found at health.gov/dietaryguidelines.

Exercise: Any physical activity is better than none. Inactive adults can achieve some health benefits from as little as 60 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week. However, the ideal target is at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of high-intensity workouts per week. For more information, visit health.gov/paguidelines.

... and long-term wealth

The recommendations for living a financially healthy life aren't quite as straightforward because they depend so much on your individual circumstances. But there are a few basic principles to ponder:

Emergency savings: The amount you need can vary depending on whether you're single or married, self-employed or work for an organization (and if that organization is a risky startup or an established entity). Typical recommendations range from three months' to a year's worth of expenses.

Retirement savings: Striving to save 15% of your income toward retirement, including any employer contributions. If this seems like a lofty goal, bear in mind that as with exercise, any activity is better than none — setting aside even a few dollars per pay period can lead to good financial habits. Consider starting small and then increasing your contributions as your financial circumstances improve.

Insurance: Make sure you have adequate amounts of health and disability income insurance, and life insurance if others depend on your income. You might also consider long-term care coverage.

FOUR NUMBERS YOU NEED TO KNOW NOW



When it comes to your finances, you might easily overlook some of the numbers that really count. Here are four to pay attention to now that might really matter in the future.

1. Retirement plan contribution rate

What percentage of your salary are you contributing to a retirement plan? Making automatic contributions through an employer-sponsored plan such as a 401(k) or 403(b) plan is an easy way to save for retirement, but this out-of-sight, out-of-mind approach may result in a disparity between what you need to save and what you actually are saving for retirement. Checking your contribution rate and increasing it periodically can help you stay on track toward your retirement savings goal. .

Some employer retirement plans let you sign up for automatic contribution rate increases each year, which is a simple way to bump up the percentage you're saving over time. In addition, try to boost your contributions when you receive a pay raise. Consider contributing at least enough to receive the full company match (if any) that your employer offers.

2. Credit score

When you apply for credit, such as a mortgage, a car loan, or a credit card, your credit score is one of the tools used by lenders to evaluate your creditworthiness. Your score will likely factor into the approval decision and affect the terms and the interest rate you'll pay.

The most common credit score that creditors consider is a FICO® Score, a three-digit number that ranges from 300 to 850. This score is based on a mathematical formula that uses information contained in your credit report. In general, the higher your score, the lower the credit risk you pose.

Each of the three major credit reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion) calculates FICO® scores using different formulas, so you may want to check your scores from all three (fees apply). It's also a good idea to get a copy of your credit report at least annually to check the accuracy of the information upon which your credit score is based. You're entitled to one free copy of your credit report every 12 months from each of the three credit reporting agencies. You can get your copy by visiting annualcreditreport.com.

3. Debt-to-income ratio

Your debt-to-income ratio (DTI) is another number that lenders may use when deciding whether to offer you credit. A DTI that is too high might mean that you are overextended. Your DTI is calculated by adding up your major monthly expenses and dividing that figure by your gross monthly income. The result is expressed as a percentage. For example, if your monthly expenses total \$2,200 and your gross monthly income is \$6,800, your DTI is 32%.

Lenders decide what DTIs are acceptable, based on the type of credit. For example, mortgage lenders generally require a ratio of 36% or less for conventional mortgages and 43% or less for FHA mortgages when considering overall expenses.

Once you know your DTI, you can take steps to reduce it if necessary. For example, you may be able to pay off a low-balance loan to remove it from the calculation. You may also want to avoid taking on new debt that might negatively affect your DTI. Check with your lender if you have any questions about acceptable DTIs or what expenses are included in the calculation.

4. Net worth

One of the key big-picture numbers you should know is your net worth, a snapshot of where you stand financially. To calculate your net worth, add up your assets (what you own) and subtract your liabilities (what you owe). Once you know your net worth, you can use it as a baseline to measure financial progress.

Ideally, your net worth will grow over time as you save more and pay down debt, at least until retirement. If your net worth is stagnant or even declining, then it might be time to make some adjustments to target your financial goals, such as trimming expenses or rethinking your investment strategy.

WHY WORK WITH A CFP®

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How does working with a CFP® certified advisor benefit you? CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professionals are held to the utmost standards of ethics and professional responsibility, which prepares them for a career-long commitment to provide truly personalized services to meet your needs; all while maintaining high levels of financial planning and professionalism. CFP® professionals maintain their professional edge through ongoing education and training in addition to the rigorous requirements to represent a high level of integrity, objectivity, competence, fairness, confidentiality, professionalism and diligence when working with you.



YOUR TEAM

James W. Bergman, CFP®

BRANCH MANAGER

james.bergman@raymondjames.com



Jon R. Bergman, CFP®

FINANCIAL ADVISOR

jon.bergman@raymondjames.com



Mark W. Chapman, CFP®

FINANCIAL ADVISOR

mark.chapman@raymondjames.com



Karen S. Willmon

CLIENT SERVICES MANAGER

karen.willmon@raymondjames.com



Erica L. Butler

SALES ASSISTANT

erica.butler@raymondjames.com



RAYMOND JAMES®

Raymond James Financial Services, Inc.

Member FINRA/SIPC

Investment advisory services offered through Raymond
James Financial Services Advisors, Inc.

James W. Bergman, CFP®

Jon R. Bergman, CFP®

Mark W. Chapman, CFP®

601 East Laurel Street
Scottsboro, AL 35768
Phone: (256) 575-8160
Fax: (256) 575-8167

www.raymondjames.com/scottsboro



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