



888.320.9993

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Welcome! Longer days, growing flowers, green grass, and sunshine are here. Take advantage of the extra energy you have now to tackle a yearly clean up of your finances. With taxes filed, you can put away – hopefully, throw away – papers and records, leaving a clean slate for the coming months.

Follow these tips for clearing out and getting fiscally fit – and, remember, we're here to help you stay *On Course!*

-Jennifer Lane, CFP

Spring cleaning? Don't forget your finances!

Use these longer days to clean out your files and keep your records up-to-date.

Credit Cards

- Don't carry all your cards with you. Take just the ones you need on that particular trip.
- Photocopy the front and back of the cards and put the copies in your safe deposit or fire-proof box.
- Check AnnualCreditReport.com to make sure you have cards for all of your open accounts.

Reminders and Auto Pay

The new credit card regulations might result in higher late fees.

- Go to the card websites to sign up for automatic reminders of due dates.
- If you have the capability, set up auto pay for any bills that charge late fees and interest.
- Pay your credit cards twice a month, e.g., on payday, to stay ahead of the game.

Shredders

No just for big offices any more, everyone can afford a shredder. You should keep:

- Bills for 12 months – to be able to track spending.
- Tax returns and back up for 7 years.
- Investment info until the sale.
- Check your local UPS store to see if they offer shredding services.

Safe Deposit or Fire-proof Boxes

- Check your estate plan to make sure it's up-to-date and keep it in the box.
- Check your life insurance and 401(k)/IRA beneficiaries.
- Make sure the right people can access and know the location of important papers.
- www.DataInherit.com for passwords and digital data.

Q&A

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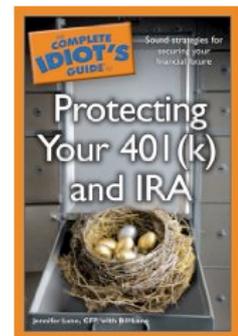
[Monthly Tip](#)



Jennifer's Hint

Your net worth statement and income-and-expense plan are two very important tools to help establish your current situation and your progress toward your goals. Each should be a one-page report that you can review once a month.

Get more tips in Jennifer's book



(click here for link)

Helpful Websites

AnnualCreditReport.com

DataInherit.com

[IRS - Keeping Records](#)

Mint.com



Q: My husband and I have been married for three years. We have a good income, but our finances are unorganized and we have too many small accounts. We want to simplify our accounts but aren't sure on how to put everything together.

-- Donna from Hingham

A: Donna -- Three years is a good time to start mixing your accounts. So many couples start out with separate accounts. One way to do this is to use Mint.com, an account aggregator. You won't actually have to move your money because Mint.com links all of your accounts so you see everything together. Once you've done that, you can both deposit your paychecks into the same account, pay household expenses from that account. Using what's left over, decide on a weekly allowance for each of you.

What's New

- Constant Contact has named Compass Planning one of its 2010 All Stars. The firm is one of Constant Contact's top performing customers.
- We now have a Facebook page. Visit www.facebook.com/AskJennifer and like us!
- Jennifer's Compass -- Jennifer recently spoke with NECN about earth-conscious investing. Click [here](#) to watch the information-packed video on her blog.
- Jennifer is now appearing on NECN every other Monday morning at 9:30 am in addition her Tuesdays' 5:00 pm and 6:30 pm appearances.
- On May 12, 2011, Jennifer will be on a panel for [Adler Blanchard & Freeman's Entrepreneurial Series: Women in Business -- Startup to Success](#).

Compass Planning Associates helps families, individuals, and small-business clients achieve financial security, knowledge, and control over their money. Our **fee-only, client-centered approach** provides education and guidance for achieving financial goals and dreams.

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