

Online banking

Why bank online?

They say 'time is money' but heading down to the bank isn't always the most straightforward, or quickest, of experiences.

Here we'll introduce you to online banking, also known as internet banking: a much more convenient way of managing money that could save you lots of time.

Handling finances online might seem complicated, but millions of people use online banking every day safely and securely.

This guide will help you get to grips with the basics.

*Instructions may vary according to your device model.

What you'll learn

1. How to set up online banking
2. How to track your money
3. How to make payments
4. How to stay safe while banking online

Setting up online banking

Many banks and other financial companies allow you to manage your money online through their websites.

Some also have services that work on your tablet or smartphone via apps. For more information on downloading apps, access our factsheet on the topic by clicking on this link or typing it into your web browser: bt.com/seniorskills

Benefits of online banking:

- **You've got the power:** With online banking, you can easily check your account balance, pay friends or companies, manage direct debits, cash in cheques, and more.
- **It's convenient:** With online banking, you can manage your money 24/7, and from anywhere with internet connection.
- **Extra rewards:** Depending on who you bank with, using online banking can unlock special rates and offers like cashback or discounts in supermarkets and shops.

- **It's safer:** People who use online banking often check their bank account more frequently, as it's easy, quick and secure. This means you can spot any problems quickly and keep on top of your finances.

Signing up for online banking is very simple. All you need is internet access and an account with your bank, building society or credit union. Although the method for registering may differ per bank, it is a very easy process.

To check what you need to register for online banking, head to your bank's 'Sign up to online banking' link on its website.

Stay secure: Make sure that you're using your bank's official website – to check this, you'll need to ensure the website address starts with 'https' and has a padlock symbol in the address bar.

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Signing up

Step one: You'll need to submit your personal details. This will be your name, date of birth, postcode and account details.

You'll need to know your account type, sort code and account number. The following are the different types of UK bank accounts:

- Current accounts
- Savings accounts
- Packaged bank accounts
- Joint bank accounts

Security tip: If you're using a computer in a public place for online banking, make sure no-one can see your screen or what you're typing and that you make sure that you click for your computer to NOT remember your details when you add them (this is usually a box that you can tick/untick on the website's login page).

Step two: It's time to choose a username (also known as a user ID), and a password. These will be the login details which you'll use every time you bank online.

It's important that you choose a password that is easy for you to remember, but difficult for anyone else to guess. To do this try to make it fairly long, avoid including personal details like birthdays etc., and ensure it includes a variety of keyboard characters – such as an uppercase letter, a number and a character.

Security tip: Always keep your username and password to yourself: if anyone else knows them, they could be able to access your bank account.

Memorable information

Some banks also require you to enter 'memorable information' for future security checks. Sometimes your bank may ask for extra login details such as a pass code, which your bank will send to you via a letter in the post. If you do not have this, you will need to phone your bank and they will send out a replacement.

Identity check

Login details confirmed, your bank will need to check your identity. They'll usually call you on the phone number that you gave them when you first set up your account (it's key to update your bank if you change your phone number.)

The caller will give you clear instructions on how to complete this step of the registration. They may also ask you questions about your personal details.

Note, not all banks check identity via phone – some may contact you by email or post instead (they'll confirm this in the online registration process).

Registration complete

With your identity confirmed, your registration should be complete. Now you can log on to your online banking service for the first time.

Features of online banking:

Account set up, here are the key services on offer:

Checking your balance

1. After logging on to online banking, your bank balance should be shown with your account details on the first page.
2. Your bank balance will likely be displayed in two forms – current and available.
 - There will be a display showing your "current or account balance" – this indicates how much money is in your account at that time.
 - The available balance is how much is actually available to you to spend, including any overdraft or pending payments that have already been taken away from the balance.
3. Often your available balance may be higher or lower than your current/account balance. This could be because a payment is still due to come out or if you have an overdraft on top of the money in your account.

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Make a payment

1. Within your online banking website or app there will be a 'make a payment' option. Click this.



2. If you've paid the person or company before, their details will be saved in this section. If you're paying them for the first time, you'll have to set them up as a new recipient.
3. If it's a new recipient, you will then be required to fill out a digital form with their details. These details will include; name, sort code and account number.
4. You'll also have to confirm the payment amount, payment date and reason for payment (the reference).
5. After adding payment details, you may have to follow a security process. This will differ from bank to bank, but may be done via a phone call or via a code sent to your phone.
6. Some banks will require you to use a card reader for setting up new recipients. You will be sent a card reader and instruction on usage when you set up internet bank. Note: your bank will confirm which security methods they use.
7. Once your security checks are complete, you will be sent a payment confirmation.

Transfer money

For those of you that have more than one bank account, you can use online banking to move money quickly between them. This can usually be found next to the payment option.

View statements

Just like receiving printed copies, you can access current and previous bank statements via online banking. Some banks also offer the ability to search within statements for previous payments made, for example, if you want to check the amount you paid is correct.

Update your details

All online banking systems will allow you to change your contact details easily and at any time.

Additional information

Logging out:

For security reasons, your online banking session will automatically 'time out' if it hasn't seen any activity for a few minutes (you might be able to set how long this is).

Be warned, timing out isn't the same as logging out. To be extra safe, you should always log out of online banking once you're done.

Be aware of scams:

Be aware, though you needed them to set up your account, your bank will never ask you for memorable information like your login details after this, either in person or via email or phone.

If someone says they're from your bank but they ask for these details, then do not respond. You can always call your bank yourself to check.

When calling your bank, make sure you use the official phone number – this will be on your bill, the back of your credit/debit card or from the bank's official website.

If you're still in doubt, you can visit your branch in person for help. However, note that not all UK banks have branches.



Hints and tips and further learning

For advice on avoiding scams, you can visit our factsheet by clicking on the following link or typing it into your web browser: bt.com/seniorskills

The following websites also have plenty of helpful resources around banking and online scams. Again, you can click the link or type it into your web browser:

An introduction to online banking: www.digitalunite.com/government-services-shopping-banking/managing-bills-online/introduction-online-banking

Managing money online: <https://new.learnmyway.com/explore-all-subjects/managing-your-money-online>

Internet scams and how to avoid them: <https://abilitynet.org.uk/factsheets/internet-scams-and-how-avoid-them>