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# PRACTICAL INDEX INVESTING FOR CANADIANS

*An online course on getting started*

## SYLLABUS

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WHERE TO ENROLL: [HTTP://PRACTICAL-INDEX-INVESTING.THINKIFIC.COM](http://practical-index-investing.thinkific.com)

### BACKGROUND:

This will be an online course to introduce people with no prior experience to do-it-yourself (DIY) investing using index funds. No background knowledge is needed or expected, though familiarity with spreadsheets (Excel or Google Sheets) will be beneficial.

The course has two aims: to show you *how* to invest, and to help you set up good processes and behaviour so that you can be successful for the long term.

As of the end of July 2016, the course has most of the central elements done and available, but is still several months from completion. This syllabus will guide you to what is coming and the current status (note from the estimated dates that I am not completing it linearly). The course is delivered online through the Thinkific platform using mixed media.

### 1. Introduction: Planning and Other Grown-up Money Concerns

- 1.1. Welcome message [video, complete]
- 1.2. Reading guide [PDF, complete]
- 1.3. What makes a good DIY investor [text, complete]
- 1.4. Exercise: budgeting [presentation/exercise, complete]
- 1.5. On Uncertainty [video, expected August]
- 1.6. On Uncertainty [text, complete]
- 1.7. Inflation [text, complete]
- 1.8. Inflation [presentation + voiceover, complete]
- 1.9. Sketching out a plan [text, complete]
- 1.10. Sketching out a plan [video, expected October]
- 1.11. Sketching out a plan: tools [links + spreadsheets, complete]

- 1.12. Monte Carlo Simulations [text, complete]
- 1.13. Using real returns and following your plan [text, complete]
- 1.14. A rant on the industry and why DIY [text, complete]
- 2. Investing: What and Why**
  - 2.1. Why we invest [presentation + voiceover, complete]
  - 2.2. Types of investments [text, complete]
  - 2.3. Exercise: valuing a business [exercise, complete]
  - 2.4. Investing in other stuff [text, complete]
  - 2.5. History of investing and setting reasonable expectations [text, complete]
- 3. The Quick and Dirty Yet Completely Convincing Explanation of Index Investing**
  - 3.1. The importance of fees [text, complete]
  - 3.2. What can be controlled (and what cannot be) [text, complete]
  - 3.3. Active vs passive investing [text, complete]
  - 3.4. The benefit of simplicity [video, expected August]
  - 3.5. The other ways of investing, and what they entail [text, expected August]
  - 3.6. The importance of “I don’t know” [video, complete]
- 4. Risk, the Gom Jabbar, and the Unfortunate Gambling Analogy**
  - 4.1. Many faces of risk and the unfortunate gambling analogy [video, complete]
  - 4.2. Risk in everything [text, complete]
  - 4.3. Risk and human psychology [text, complete]
  - 4.4. Risk tolerance [presentation + voiceover, complete]
  - 4.5. The Gom Jabbar and a Value Investing Perspective [text, complete]
  - 4.6. Risk Tolerance Questionnaire [text, complete]
- 5. Where I Talk About Processes**
  - 5.1. Processes and lessons from engineering and health care [video, expected August]
  - 5.2. Good enough solutions [text, expected August]
  - 5.3. Execution risk and the behaviour gap [presentation + voiceover, expected August]
  - 5.4. The long term is just a series of days [text, expected August]
  - 5.5. Using calendar reminders, writing things down, checklists [presentation + voiceover, expected August]
  - 5.6. Human behaviour and money [text, expected August]
- 6. Asset Allocation and Your Plan**
  - 6.1. The canonical portfolio [text, complete]
  - 6.2. Asset Class Apocrypha [text, complete]
  - 6.3. How to decide on an allocation that works for you [presentation + voiceover, expected August]
  - 6.4. The value of diversification [text, expected August]

6.5. Pensions and other factors to consider [text, complete]

## **7. How You Actually Do This: Four Practical Investing Options**

7.1. Four Practical Options [text, complete]

7.2. How-To: Tangerine [presentation + voiceover, complete]

7.3. Robo-advisors [presentation + voiceover, complete]

7.4. TD e-series: Two Paths [text, complete]

7.5. How-To: TD e-series with TD MF [presentation + voiceover, complete]

7.6. How-To: TD e-series with TDDI [presentation + voiceover, complete]

7.7. How-To: ETFs with Questrade [presentation + voiceover, complete]

7.8. Terminology & More Details on Exchange Trades [text, complete]

7.9. Choosing ETFs [text, complete]

7.10. Norbert's Gambit [text, complete]

7.11. Checklists [text, complete]

## **8. Taxes and Tax Shelters**

8.1. Introduction [text, complete]

8.2. TFSA [text, complete]

8.3. RRSP [text, complete]

8.4. TFSA vs RRSP Decision Guide [PDF, complete]

8.5. TFSA vs RRSP Decision Guide Walkthrough [presentation + voiceover, complete]

8.6. RRSP and Pre-Tax Money [text + worksheet, complete]

8.7. RRSP Fancy Footwork [text, complete]

8.8. RESP [text, complete]

8.9. RDSP [text, complete]

8.10. Optimizing: US withholding tax [presentation + voiceover + worksheet, complete]

8.11. Optimizing: splitting allocation [presentation + voiceover + spreadsheet, complete]

8.12. Non-registered accounts, tax matters overview [text + worksheet, complete]

8.13. Non-registered accounts, reporting taxes [presentation + voiceover, complete]

8.14. Account allocation [text, complete]

8.15. Exercise: adjusted cost base [exercise, complete]

## **9. Writing Stuff Down and Making Spreadsheets**

9.1. Condensing your goals and direction down into a written plan [text, expected October]

9.2. Writing down your asset allocation and a rebalancing plan [text + spreadsheet, draft, expected August]

9.3. Writing down your asset allocation and a rebalancing plan [presentation + voiceover, expected October]

9.4. Tools that exist and can help [text, expected October]

## **10. Behaviour and the Long Term**

10.1. The importance of attitude, behaviour, and long-term thinking [text, expected October]

10.2. Neat grey-matter tricks [text, expected October]

10.3. Social animals and keeping up with the Joneses [text, expected October]

10.4. Heuristics and rules-of-thumb [presentation + voiceover, expected October]

10.5. Problems in the industry [video, expected October]

10.6. DIY investor pledge

## **11. Discussion and FAQs**

11.1. Will depend on questions received [following completion, November]