

INVESTING

QuickStart Guide

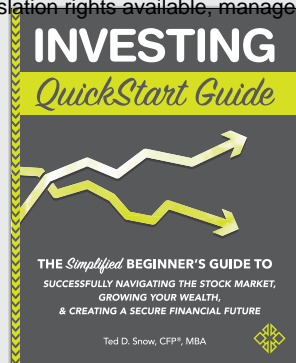
The Simplified Beginner's Guide to
Navigating the Stock Market, Growing Your Wealth,
& Creating a Secure Financial Future

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INVESTING QUICKSTART GUIDE:

The Simplified Beginner's Guide to
Navigating the Stock Market, Growing Your Wealth,
& Creating a Secure Financial Future

By Ted D. Snow, CFP®, MBA

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email: skrupp@clydebankmedia.com

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ABOUT THE BOOK:

The *Investing QuickStart Guide* offers a simplified but expansive introduction to the world of investing. Author Ted Snow brings 30 years of experience in the finance industry, much to the benefit of novice learners and experienced investors alike. Snow provides readers with the complete picture on stocks, bonds, treasuries, ETFs, mutual funds, indexes, REITS and several other investment securities. Snow's intrepid but practical asset-allocation investment philosophy is marvelously communicated and highly appropriate for market newcomers.

The key insights of Warren Buffett, Peter Lynch, Burton Malkiel, and James Altucher all play important roles in this seminal investment resource. But unlike most of today's books on investment, the *Investing QuickStart Guide* threads the needle between thorough and simple. You will learn the market from end to end, while also enjoying Snow's fascinating personal stories and insights from the front lines of the finance industry.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Ted D. Snow, CFP®, MBA, has been working in the financial services industry since 1987. He has contributed numerous articles featured in outlets like CNBC, Investopedia, and Forbes. Ted has appeared twice on *D Magazine's* Best Financial Planners in Dallas list. He is the founder of Snow Financial Group LLC and holds an MBA in financial planning from the University of Dallas, where he graduated magna cum laude. Ted and his wife Mary live in the greater Dallas metro area.

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A LOOK INSIDE THE BOOK

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P/E (Price-Earnings) Ratio

In Figure 6, you will notice a column labeled P/E. This stands for price-earnings ratio and is one of the most commonly discussed and used metrics used by equity traders, especially when considering whether a stock is "cheap" or "expensive."

P/E = The Stock Price per Share Annual Earnings per Share

P/E is calculated by dividing the price of a stock by its earnings per share (EPS). A good way to illustrate the importance of this metric is by walking it down to the level of a small business. Let's say there is an auto mechanic who runs a parts and repair shop and the shop has brought in a million dollars in earnings over the last four quarters. The owner of the shop decides that he wants to sell the shop and is asking twenty million dollars. The price-earnings ratio of the shop is then 20, or 20x. At a glance, it may appear that this is a fairly expensive proposition. If you bought the auto shop, then you would essentially have to wait twenty years before making a full return on your investment. But such a view only takes into account earnings, not capital gain. If the business improves over time, then you have the potential not only to have earnings higher than \$1M, but you can also sell the business at a higher price (which is much easier to do after earnings go up).

Now, let's say that you are actually interested in buying the auto shop for twenty million. You are about ready to pull the trigger on the deal when a friend of yours tells you that there is another auto shop that just went on the market. This auto shop brought in 1.5 million over the last four quarters and the owner is asking twenty-eight million for the business.

Based solely on price-earnings, which auto shop is the better buy?

Answer: The P/E for the first auto shop is 20. The P/E for the second shop is 21.5, or 14.7x. Looking only at P/E, the second shop is a better deal.

To calculate the earnings per share of a stock, divide the company's total earnings in dollars by the number of total shares outstanding. P/E allows investors to give more meaning to the otherwise arbitrary price of a stock.

Stocks with a high P/E are considered expensive, more dollars have to be spent for each dollar of earnings. Low P/E stocks are considered "cheap," a good way. The P/E metric is not only used to evaluate stocks but can also be calculated and evaluated with respect to entire industries, funds, and even personal portfolios.

Some stocks will not have their P/E listed. This is either because there is no current data available to calculate P/E, or because the P/E is actually negative, because the company has been losing money.

"Annual earnings" are the net earnings accrued over the previous four quarters.

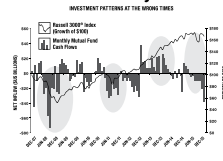
Usually, the P/E you find listed in a stock table is the "trailing" P/E, meaning that it reflects the stock's earnings over the last four quarters. A "forward" P/E is another way of assessing P/E, whereby analysts calculate the firm's last four quarters with their projections for the next four quarters. Obviously, forward P/E will not always be as accurate as trailing P/E, but it could prove useful. For instance, if new market forces appear or big news comes out that is relevant to the welfare of the company, a forward P/E will be able to take this new information into account.

The Difference Between "Earnings" & "Profit" Earnings, not profit, are used to calculate a stock's P/E ratio. Earnings and profit are similar but certainly not identical concepts. Earnings refer to the amount of money taken in versus the costs of the goods sold and minus the costs of all other efforts that immediately contribute to the revenue gain. Profit is wider in scope, including an account of all other overhead and administrative costs. Over any given period, a company's profit will be less than its earnings, and "profit" is the equivalent of net profit.

Dividend Yield Referring to Figure 8, there are two columns in the stock table that provide information about dividends: the DIV column and the YLD % column. The DIV column quotes the current annual dividend of the stock. BAC is quoted at \$7, meaning that for each share of Bank of America stock owned, an investor would be paid \$7 in dividends over the course of a year. The YLD % column shows the current dividend as a percentage of the stock's overall price. Investors who rely on their stock portfolio

most people like to think that they have good sensibilities when it comes to managing their money. But after spending thirty years in the financial services business, I can tell you with an unshakable conviction to report the truth—many people are poor managers of their investments and personal finances. Don't take my word for it, though. All you have to do is look at down market returns up market investment trends and data. When securities lose value, people will sell them off when they should be buying them. And when securities gain value, people buy them when they should be selling them off.

Recent Proof of a "Buy High & Sell Low" Mentality



The first two gray rods from the left in Figure 14¹⁷ show how dips in the market (represented by the Russell 2000 index) coincide with an outflow of investment dollars from a mutual fund. The third gray rod shows a period of market growth coinciding with an increase in mutual fund investments. These correlations illustrate a "buy high, sell low" mentality that is counterproductive to success in the marketplace. Investors according to this mentality because this counterproductive behavior is intuitive. It just like the right to do at the time. A good financial advisor bringing years of experience to the table on your behalf can prove an invaluable buffer against intuitively reacting but un-

timely poor financial judgment calls. Most people pay—do not underestimate the simple history of having someone in your corner to talk to when you need a little assistance.

The markets have an incredible 100 percent track record when it comes to recovery, but during a down economy, when you are watching your portfolio decline in value, it can be difficult to act out of historical assumptions rather than out of panic.

Robo vs. Human THE ADVISOR WARS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Robo-Advisor	Human Advisor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower fees (25% to 5%) Pre-packaged investment-only plans May give undue prominence to expensive proprietary funds May offer tax-loss harvesting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard fee is 1% Comprehensive & personal investment plans May offer tax management and other financial services A buffer against "bad financial behavior"

From Brokerages to Robo-Advisors 53

Dollar Cost Average Strategy for WFIH Purchase

MONTH	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Buy Price	\$10.33	\$10.33	\$10.33	\$10.33	\$10.33	\$10.33
Share Price	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10
Shares Purchased	5	6	6	7	4	5

MONTH	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Buy Price	\$10.33	\$10.33	\$10.33	\$10.33	\$10.33	\$10.33
Share Price	\$20	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$17	\$17
Shares Purchased	4	9	7	6	5	5

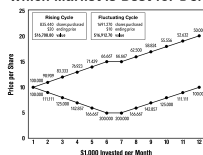
Dollar cost averaging does not, by any means, guarantee income more long for their back. If you have the cash to invest and you choose to gradually enter into a position, over time, there is always the risk that you will end up paying more for fewer shares than you would have paid had you invested all at once. Furthermore, once you possess a strategy where you are making more frequent trades, you will incur added expense in the form of commissions and fees. In our WFIH example above, the investor would have to factor in the costs of the trade commissions and fees over the course of a year. If each trade costs \$1 (360 in total), then the \$250 value of the strategy must be reduced to \$250.

Q: Is the dollar cost averaging strategy more likely to be successful in an up market or a down market? What do you think?

Consider the following scenario: you have a thousand dollars of investment money, and you decide to use the dollar cost averaging (DCA) strategy to gradually buy into a stock that is currently selling for \$10 per share. Figure 26 depicts how this strategy could play out in two different market environments.

In the first environment (the "rising cycle") the stock is steadily climbing in value. In the second environment (the "fluctuating cycle") the stock declines and then gradually regains strength.

Which Market is Best for DCA



At the end of twelve months, the use of DCA in the fluctuating cycle resulted in the more valuable position, \$16,312.70 versus \$16,298.00. This is because the investor in the fluctuating cycle was able to purchase more shares at a lower price. By the end of the twelve-month period, the fluctuating cycle investor bought about twice as many shares as the rising cycle investor. Because the fluctuating cycle investor was able to acquire more shares throughout the period, he was positioned to reap greater net benefits when the stock began to climb in price, enough to surpass the rising cycle investor despite the fact that the stock itself was worth twice as much at the end of the rising cycle.

At the end of the day it is clear, even on stock price, that the investor can only generate wealth. You can quote me on that. Dollar cost averaging is a good tool for investors who are new to investing or particularly cautious about a certain investment and want to test the waters before they plunge right in. If a stock is particularly volatile, dollar cost averaging can be used to help ensure that you do not put in all your money at the peak of the stock's price. Using a DCA strategy can also serve to insulate you

you execute your option contract, then you will profit \$50. That is, you buy the stock for \$100, the price paid for your option contract, and immediately sell it at its new market value of \$150, a difference of \$50. Thus you calculate the \$50 premium you paid to own the option. Not only are you left with a \$50 profit.

In another example, Kate O'Brien wants the stock, the price goes up to \$200, and rather than buying the stock, she simply sells the option contract to another party. Remember, when you bought the \$100 option for \$50, she was willing to pay \$125. Now that the stock is selling for \$200, your \$100 option, which does not expire for another three months, is going to be worth a lot more than the \$50 you paid for it six months ago.

Replicate the above in our example with stocks and other securities, and you have options trading in a nutshell. Options trading markets can be complicated and fast-paced environments that are not conducive to the interests of many beginning level or conservative-minded investors. Day traders are often and options traders as they do in trading the right to own a stock (usually) at an agreed-upon price (the way we called in the above for \$100 to buy despite the fact that by July market price was \$200). We would the call option and we used it. Reflectively, if you buy/own a put option, then you have the right to put the stock back into the market at a specific price.

Here are the essentials of options trading:

- When you buy a call option, you want the stock's price to go up.
- When you sell a call option, you want the stock's price to stay the same or go down.
- When you buy a put option, you want the stock's price to go down.
- When you sell a put option, you want the stock's price to stay the same or go up.

Let's say you buy a \$100 put option rather than a \$100 call option on the stock from the previous example. This put option would prove practically worthless if the price shot up to \$200. You would still have the right to sell the stock for \$100, but why would you? It is easier to do so when you first knew how to buy the stock at its current market price (\$200). You would not see \$100 for the premium you paid to own the option. Not good. On the flip side, if something happened causing the price of the stock to drop to \$50, then your put option (let's say you paid a \$25 premium to own it) would be profitable. You would be able to buy the stock at its current market price (\$50) then exercise the \$100 put option to sell the stock for \$100. After deducting the premium you paid to buy the option (\$25) you would be left with a \$25 profit.

The main factors affecting the premium you pay for any given option are, of course, the current value of the underlying security and the total duration of the contract. The longer the duration of the contract, the higher the premium. Options are not used only by day traders. Traditional investors, especially higher-net-worth individuals who have significant sums of money in the markets, can leverage options trading. One common application is known as selling a covered call. A covered call option simply means that the writer/seller already owns sufficient shares in the underlying security or is to cover all obligations in the event that the option is exercised by the buyer.

I have 100 shares of Round Mound Spigot stock (RMS), and I write a call option that guarantees another party the right to purchase 100 RMS shares for \$15 per share at any time within the next three months. This is a covered call, because I already own the shares that are so committing to sell. Now let's say that RMS is selling for \$15 at the time that I write this option. The \$15 "strike price" of my option is a dollar higher than the current value of the underlying stock (\$14). In order for the buyer of my option to profit, RMS will have to go up in value. The buyer pays a premium of \$5 cents per share. At \$100, that's \$50 in fees to pay me to own the right to buy RMS from me at a \$15 a share at any time over the next three months.

Options contracts are typically for purchases of 100 shares (1 contract = 100 shares).

Selling a call option against shares that you already own, also known as selling a covered call, is one of the more conservative options strategies.

The Short Game 133

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING...

INVESTING QUICKSTART GUIDE: THE SIMPLIFIED BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO NAVIGATING THE STOCK MARKET, GROWING YOUR WEALTH, & CREATING A SECURE FINANCIAL FUTURE

*"Ted has accomplished a **rare blend of important objectives in this book**. On the one hand, this resource is an excellent introduction for new investors to devour as they learn the discipline and strategies it takes to be a good investor. I plan to buy some copies to give away to people I run across who express interest in learning more about investing. On the other hand, I found Ted's compilation to be an excellent reference for the experienced investment team in our advisory office. While I was familiar with most of the topics discussed, there were some that I needed a refresher on, which Ted has done succinctly and effectively. Now, instead of immediately turning to Google or Investopedia, I'll turn to this book when I need to research an investment concept. Yet what I love most about Ted and his work is his **commitment to teaching investing in the proper context of living life with great purpose and intentionality**. Life and wealth have tremendous purpose, and Ted helps readers grasp this important truth."*

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Roseman Wealth Advisors, Tyler, TX

*"Useful information and practical application are what people look for when they start investing their own money. Ted has compiled **valuable, easy-to-learn-and-understand graphics, anecdotes, reminders, hints, and examples of what it takes to establish a foundation of solid investment skills**. Three decades of experience are shining through in his book to educate people to be successful investors."*

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"Ted has always impressed me with his perfect balance between financial planning strategies and a genuine care for his clients. This book is full of Ted's wisdom. It is an excellent, well written, easy-to-understand foundation for beginners wanting to start investing, and a wonderful resource for tenured investors."

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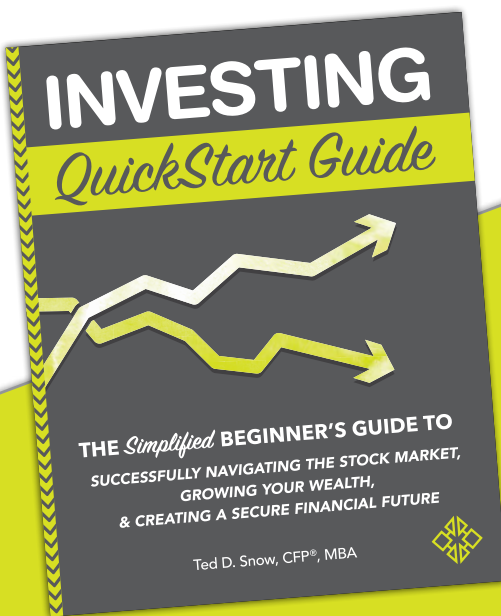
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TED D. SNOW, CFP®, MBA, has been working in the financial services industry since 1987. He has contributed numerous articles featured in outlets like CNBC, Investopedia, and Forbes. Ted has appeared twice on *D Magazine's* Best Financial Planners in Dallas list. He is the founder of Snow Financial Group LLC and holds an MBA in financial planning from the University of Dallas, where he graduated magna cum laude. Ted and his wife Mary live in the greater Dallas metro area.



TED D. SNOW, CFP®, MBA, is the author of the **Investing QuickStart Guide: The Simplified Beginner's Guide to Navigating the Stock Market, Growing Your Wealth, & Creating a Secure Financial Future**. He is also the **founder of Snow Financial Group**: <http://www.snowfinancialgroup.com>



MEDIA APPEARANCES

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EXPERIENCE:

- Master's degree in financial planning from the University of Dallas 1995
- Adjunct professor at the University of Dallas Graduate School of Management (1999–2007)
- Bachelor's degree in finance from Utah State University 1986
- Named in the article "Best Financial Planners in Dallas" as seen in *D Magazine*
- Named in the "Guide to America's Top Financial Planners" annually since 2005
- Has been in the financial services profession since 1987

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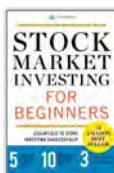
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- *Investing QuickStart Guide* is the most simplified presentation of the material on the market. No unnecessary fluff is included to distract or confuser readers.
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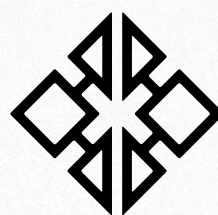
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