

Checkbook Balancing Made Simple

How Your Statement Works

Seldom will your statement and checkbook register agree. But, that is no reason to panic. It's merely a matter of timing. Your statement lists the transactions that have posted to or cleared your account during that month. It takes a few days after month end for the statement to be printed and for it to arrive in the mail. Meanwhile, you are continuing to use your debit card, write checks, make ATM withdrawals and/or deposits, and hopefully, keeping track of these transactions in your checkbook register. Remember, it also takes a few days for your debit card transactions, checks, and/or deposit transactions to be recorded on your account.

Record, Balance, Repeat

Recording each transaction in your checkbook register and adding or subtracting it from the balance is the first step to simplifying the balancing act. It's important to record the transaction at the time you actually swipe your card, write the check, make a withdrawal, or make a deposit. By recording the transactions and balancing your account total in your checkbook register, you'll get a clearer picture of your spending habits and know exactly how much money you have. And, if for some reason you detect a problem, the sooner you can correct it, the better.

The Balancing Act

Balancing your checkbook each month within a day or two of receiving your statement will not only reduce your stress level, it will lessen the amount of time it takes to complete the task.

On the back of your monthly statement is a handy form to help you balance. Use it along with the following steps to make balancing a snap. **Note:** If you are enrolled in eStatements, log in to retrieve your statement and click "View Back of Statement".

Before you begin, gather the following:

- Your last two statements
- Your checkbook and register
- Any Debit/ATM Card Receipts that you did not record in your checkbook register
- A pencil
- A calculator

Seven Simple Steps to Balancing

1. Record Interest Earned

- In your checkbook register, enter the interest earned on your account (if applicable). The interest paid will appear at the top right on the front of your statement.
- Add this to the balance you have in your checkbook. Be sure to record any other credit amounts listed, such as direct deposits.

2. Record Service Charges, etc.

- In your checkbook register, record any charges that have been subtracted from your account, as shown on your statement. These charges may include monthly services charges, ATM transaction charges, Overdraft or Returned Item fees

Last Checkbook balance	_____
+ Interest Paid	_____
Subtotal	_____
- Service Charges	_____
“New” Checkbook Balance	_____

3. Verify Deposit Amounts

- Look at your latest statement and verify that all deposits listed match the deposit amounts listed in your checkbook register.
- Make a list of any deposits that are listed in your register but do not appear on your statement. Add these together.
- **Tip:** Use the worksheet on the back of your statement. If you are enrolled in eStatements, log in to retrieve your statement and click “View Back of Statement”.

4. Match All Transactions

- Match the entries in your register with the transactions listed on your statement. Compare the details of each transaction. If these items match, place a check “✓” mark next to the transaction in both your register and on the statement. If they don’t match, circle the item in both places so that you can come back to fix the error once all of the transactions have been checked off. Remember, some items will not be checked off. These are called “Outstanding Items” and we will deal with them later.
- **If transactions don’t match check for one of two errors:**
 1. The item was recorded incorrectly in your checkbook register
 2. The item was paid or credited to your account for the wrong amount
- **To correct the errors**
 1. Simply look at your check images and any receipts

5. Check for Outstanding Items from Previous Statements

- Be sure that all of the outstanding items from your previous statements have been included in this statement. Otherwise, they are still outstanding.
- **Note:** If an item is outstanding for 60 days or more, contact the person or company you are paying and see if they have received or initiated your payment.

6. List All Outstanding Items

- Make a list of all outstanding items. These are transactions that appear in your checkbook register that do not have a check “✓” mark next to them. Add these items together.
- **Tip:** Use the worksheet on the back of your statement. If you are enrolled in eStatements, log in to retrieve your statement and click “View Back of Statement”.

7. Balance

- Now, balance your checkbook register to your statement. Use the formula below, which is also located on the worksheet on the back of your statement.

Statement Ending Balance	
ADD (+) Deposits Shown in Checkbook Register But Not on Statement	
Subtotal	
MINUS (-) Total Outstanding Checks	
Total	\$

- Compare this total with the ending balance in your checkbook register. They should be the same. If not, there’s a mistake. **Do Not Panic!** This can be easily fixed. If they are the same Congratulations! You’ve successfully balanced your checkbook.

If Things Don’t Add Up

- Start by re-verifying your outstanding items.
- What’s the difference? Is your checkbook balance higher or lower than your statement? Subtract the smaller figure from the larger one to get the difference. Now...
 - **Divide the difference by 9.** If 9 goes in evenly (with nothing left over), the problem is transposed numbers. For example, \$258 was recorded as \$285. Go back and double-check your amounts.
 - **Divide the difference by 2.** If the answer you get is a “normal” dollar amount (i.e., \$7.19 rather than \$15.125), look for that amount in your register, it was added instead of subtracted, or vice versa.

Still Doesn’t Balance?

Well, you’ve tried hard and made every effort. Now it’s time to ask for help. Call or come by one of our branches. You will need to bring in your current statement and your checkbook register. Every effort will be made to assist you to balance and next time it will be easier.