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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 June 2016, the course is 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 [exercise/text, draft, expected June]
- 1.5. On Uncertainty [video, expected July]
- 1.6. On Uncertainty [text, draft, expected June]
- 1.7. Inflation [text, draft, expected June]
- 1.8. Inflation [video, expected July]
- 1.9. Sketching out a plan [text, draft, expected June]
- 1.10. Sketching out a plan [video, expected October]
- 1.11. Sketching out a plan: tools [links + spreadsheets, draft, expected June]

- 1.12. Sketching out a plan: what a Monte Carlo simulation is, and when to get help on a more detailed plan [text, draft, expected June]
- 1.13. A note on what using real returns will mean for following your plan [text, draft, expected June]
- 1.14. A rant on the industry and why DIY [text or video, expected July]
- 2. Investing: What and Why**
  - 2.1. Why we invest [presentation + voiceover, expected July]
  - 2.2. Types of investments [text, draft, expected June]
  - 2.3. Investing in businesses [text, draft, expected June]
  - 2.4. Exercise: valuing a business [exercise, draft, expected July]
  - 2.5. Investing in other stuff [text, draft, expected July]
  - 2.6. Risk and trade-offs [presentation + voiceover, draft, expected July]
  - 2.7. History of investing and setting reasonable expectations [text, expected July]
- 3. The Quick and Dirty Yet Completely Convincing Explanation of Index Investing**
  - 3.1. The importance of fees [text, draft, expected July]
  - 3.2. What can be controlled (and what cannot be) [text, draft, expected July]
  - 3.3. Active vs passive investing [text, expected July]
  - 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, expected July]
- 4. Risk, the Gom Jabbar, and the Unfortunate Gambling Analogy**
  - 4.1. Risk in everything [video, expected July]
  - 4.2. Many definitions of risk [presentation + voiceover, expected July]
  - 4.3. Risk on different timescales [text, expected July]
  - 4.4. Risk tolerance [presentation + voiceover, expected July]
  - 4.5. Enduring a market crash in real-time and Dune’s Gom Jabbar [text, draft, expected June]
  - 4.6. Gambling and the bet to take 100 times [text, expected July]
- 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, draft, expected July]
- 6.2. How to decide on an allocation that works for you [presentation + voiceover, expected August]
- 6.3. Apocrypha and quasi-passive approaches [text, draft, expected July]
- 6.4. The value of diversification [text, expected August]
- 6.5. Pensions and other factors to consider [text, expected August]

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

- 7.1. Robo-advisors [presentation + voiceover, expected July]
- 7.2. Tangerine [presentation + voiceover, expected July]
- 7.3. TD e-series [presentation + voiceover, expected July]
- 7.4. ETFs with Questrade and other brokerages [presentation + voiceover, expected July]
- 7.5. Checklists [text, expected August]

## **8. How You Actually Do This: 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, mostly 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]

## **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. Non-registered accounts, detailed tax tracking and reporting [presentation+ voiceover + spreadsheet, expected September]

9.5. 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]