
PRACTICAL INDEX INVESTING FOR CANADIANS

An online course on getting started

SYLLABUS

INSTRUCTOR: JOHN ROBERTSON, PHD

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 November 2016, the course is nearly complete, with a few modules (mostly from the last two sections) still to be completed in the coming weeks. This syllabus will guide you to what is coming and the current status. 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, complete]
- 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: tools [links + spreadsheets, complete]
- 1.11. Monte Carlo simulations [text, complete]
- 1.12. Using real returns and following your plan [text, complete]

- 1.13. 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. MERQ (or MERXXX) [text, complete]
 - 3.3. What can be controlled (and what cannot be) [text, complete]
 - 3.4. Active vs passive investing [text, complete]
 - 3.5. The benefit of simplicity [video, complete]
 - 3.6. What active investing entails [text, complete]
 - 3.7. The importance of “I don’t know” [video, complete]
- 4. Risk, the Gom Jabbar, and the Unfortunate Gambling Analogy**
 - 4.1. Risk is everywhere [text, complete]
 - 4.2. Risk and the unfortunate gambling analogy [video, 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 [text, complete]
 - 5.2. Good enough solutions [text, complete]
 - 5.3. Execution risk and the behaviour gap [presentation + voiceover, expected December]
 - 5.4. The long term is just a series of days [text, complete]
- 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 December]
 - 6.4. The value of diversification [text, expected December]
 - 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 TDMF [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. RRSP and US withholding tax [presentation + voiceover + worksheet + infographic, complete]
- 8.11. Non-registered accounts, tax matters overview [text + worksheet, complete]
- 8.12. Non-registered accounts, reporting taxes [presentation + voiceover, complete]
- 8.13. Account allocation [text, complete]
- 8.14. 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 December]
- 9.2. Writing down your asset allocation and a rebalancing plan [text + spreadsheet, draft, expected December]
- 9.3. Writing down your asset allocation and a rebalancing plan [presentation + voiceover, expected December]
- 9.4. Tools that exist and can help [text, expected December]

10. Behaviour and the Long Term

- 10.1. The importance of attitude, behaviour, and long-term thinking [text, expected December]
- 10.2. Neat grey-matter tricks [text, expected December]
- 10.3. Social animals and keeping up with the Joneses [text, expected December]

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

10.5. Problems in the industry [video, complete]

10.6. DIY investor pledge

11. Discussion and FAQs

11.1. [Will depend on questions received; 2 questions so far]