FREE CHECKLIST · WEALTH ASSIMILATION

Roth IRA Setup Checklist

Every step to open, fund, and invest your Roth IRA — in order

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Every step to open, fund, and invest your Roth IRA — in order, nothing skipped.

STEP 1 — ELIGIBILITY CHECK

- [ ] I have earned income this year (wages, salary, self-employment, tips)
- [ ] My filing status and MAGI (Modified Adjusted Gross Income):

- Single / Head of Household: full contribution if MAGI < $146,000 (2024)
- Married Filing Jointly: full contribution if MAGI < $230,000 (2024)
- [ ] My estimated MAGI: $_____ — I am eligible: Full / Partial / Backdoor only

- [ ] I am not contributing more than I earned this year

STEP 2 — CONTRIBUTION LIMITS (2024)

- Under age 50: max $7,000 / year
- Age 50 or older: max $8,000 / year (catch-up contribution)
- [ ] My contribution limit this year: $_____
- [ ] Monthly contribution to hit annual max: $_____ / month

STEP 3 — BROKER COMPARISON

For each broker considered:

- [ ] Broker name: ______________________________
- [ ] Account minimum: $_____
- [ ] Commissions / trading fees: $_____
- [ ] Index fund options (look for Vanguard, Fidelity, or Schwab funds)
- [ ] Mobile app rating: _____
- [ ] Automatic investment / recurring contribution option: Yes / No

Top recommended brokers: Fidelity (no minimum), Vanguard (index fund pioneer), Schwab (no minimum, strong research)

STEP 4 — OPEN YOUR ACCOUNT

- [ ] Gather required info: SSN, date of birth, bank account + routing number
- [ ] Go to broker website — select "Open a Roth IRA"
- [ ] Complete identity verification
- [ ] Link your bank account via ACH
- [ ] Select "Roth IRA" (not Traditional — confirm this)
- [ ] Account number received: ______________________________

STEP 5 — INITIAL FUNDING

- [ ] Transfer initial contribution: $_____
- [ ] Contribution year designated (current or prior year if before April 15): _____
- [ ] Funds settled in account (1–3 business days for ACH)
- [ ] Confirm funds are in CASH position (not yet invested)

STEP 6 — INVESTMENT SELECTION

Simplest high-performance option: a single total market index fund.

- [ ] Fidelity: FZROX (zero expense ratio) or FSKAX
- [ ] Vanguard: VTSAX (0.04% ER) or VTI (ETF equivalent)
- [ ] Schwab: SWTSX (0.03% ER)
- [ ] Alternative: target-date fund (e.g., Vanguard Target Retirement 2055) — auto-rebalances

Selected fund(s): ______________________________

Expense ratio: _____ %

- [ ] Buy order placed for full cash balance
- [ ] Confirm all cash is invested (no idle cash unless intentional)

STEP 7 — AUTOMATE CONTRIBUTIONS

- [ ] Set up monthly automatic contribution: $_____ on the _____ of each month
- [ ] Verify auto-invest is enabled (reinvests in your chosen fund automatically)
- [ ] Set a calendar reminder each April to confirm prior-year contribution

STEP 8 — BACKDOOR ROTH (if income exceeds limits)

- [ ] Open a Traditional IRA at same broker
- [ ] Make non-deductible contribution to Traditional IRA: $7,000 (2024)
- [ ] Convert to Roth IRA within same tax year
- [ ] File IRS Form 8606 with tax return
- [ ] Confirm no other pre-tax Traditional IRA assets (pro-rata rule)

ANNUAL CHECKLIST

- [ ] Max out contribution by April 15 of following year
- [ ] Rebalance if target allocation drifted by 5%+
- [ ] Review beneficiary designation
