



Be first to
real time.

With Verizon 5G Ultra Wideband.
Get the new Samsung Galaxy S10 5G.

Buy Now

5G Ultra Wideband is available only in parts of select cities.

Get the new Samsung Galaxy S10 5G.

Advertisement

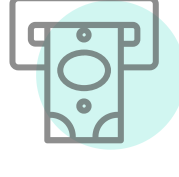
BANKING AND LOANS ▶ **BASICS**

Can I Write a Check to Myself?

You can write a check, but there might be better options



Advertisement



Banking and Loans

BASICS

SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

CHECKING ACCOUNTS

CERTIFICATES OF
DEPOSIT

ONLINE BANKING

HOME LOANS

ALL BANKING AND
LOANS>



Image by Jessica Olah. © The Balance 2018

BY [JUSTIN PRITCHARD](#) • Updated May 15, 2019

In the age of electronic payments, it's easy to give money to somebody *else*, but what if you want to move money between your own accounts or just get cash out of the bank? You have several options available, ranging from old-fashioned to high-tech.

Advertisement

Write a Check

A simple option, which might be available to you right now (without opening new accounts or dealing with passwords), is to write yourself a check. You can then deposit the check to another account, or just cash it.

To **write the check**, [fill it out](#) like any other check, and put your own name on the line that says "[Pay to the order of](#)" (or similar). You could also make the check [payable to "Cash,"](#) but that's risky: a check made out to Cash can be cashed or deposited by anybody who has it, so a lost or stolen check can cause problems. [Fill in the amount](#) you are seeking.

To **move funds between banks**, (if you're [switching banks](#) or adding funds to an online bank account, for example) write yourself a check and deposit the funds into your other account. However, be aware that there might be easier – possibly faster – ways to move the money electronically.

To deposit the check, [endorse the back](#) by signing it (add the restriction "For deposit only"). There are several ways to make the deposit:

- By [taking a picture](#) of the check with your mobile device and your bank's app
- By [depositing the check at an ATM](#)
- By taking the check to [your bank in-person](#) (or [mailing it in](#))

The same process applies if you're just trying to move funds between accounts at the same bank (although you might be able to accomplish the transfer online or with a phone call to your bank).

Advertisement

For example, you might want to pay yourself by moving funds from a business account to your personal account. The names on those accounts are different, so an automated transfer might not be an option.

If **you're getting cash**, endorse the check once you're ready to cash the check at your bank or credit union. To do so, sign your name on the back, and provide identification to the teller. You'll most likely only be able to cash the check at your own bank, although check cashing stores, grocery stores, and [other banks](#) might be an option.

Important: Keep in mind that you might not be able to cash the check for the *full* amount you wrote it for. Banks limit [how much is available](#) immediately, and the remainder will be available for withdrawal in several days.

However, if you cash your check at the same bank the check draws the funds from, they should be able to provide the full amount in cash.

Advertisement

Easier Ways to Get Cash

Assuming you just want some spending money – and you're not moving the funds to a new bank account – you might not even need to write yourself a check. There are a few alternatives that might be easier, and which won't require you to use up one of your checks:

- [Withdraw cash at an ATM](#) using your debit card
- Withdraw cash with a live teller (credit union members can potentially visit a [different credit union](#) and withdraw with no fee).
- Pay for whatever you're buying with a [debit card](#) (or better yet, a [credit card](#) that you pay off every month because credit cards have better [consumer protection features](#))

In the past, it was common for people to write themselves checks to get cash. In the electronic world, that practice is becoming less common – but sometimes it's still the easiest option.

Advertisement

Other Ways to Move Your Money

Moving money from one bank account to another doesn't need to be cumbersome. Writing yourself a check means you'll have to wait for the check to get to your bank, and you'll have to wait [several business days](#) for the funds to clear before you can spend any money. Several electronic tools make the process easier (and faster).

ACH transfers: The simplest method is a [bank-to-bank transfer](#) (also known as ACH transfers), where your money moves electronically from one account to another. To use this option, one of your banks needs to offer a bank-to-bank transfer service ([online banks](#) typically allow you to link [several accounts](#) – which is [one more reason](#) for using an online bank account – but brick-and-mortar banks are increasingly likely to offer this feature as well). Funds typically move through the [Automated Clearing House \(ACH\) network](#) (a network of banks nationwide that facilitate the process of transferring funds electronically), usually for free.

Online services and apps: Third-party services can also do the job if your bank doesn't provide a transfer service or you prefer user-friendly apps. These apps provide an alternative way to access funds in your traditional bank account. The drawback is that it may take some time and effort to set up accounts with those services (and the initial verification or security confirmations often take a few business days). Moreover, there may be limits on how much you can move in any single transaction – small payments are easy, but larger transfers may take several steps.

For example, you might already have a PayPal account that's linked to a checking account. By using a different email address, you can set up an [additional PayPal](#) account that is linked to a different bank account. Then, you can send money to yourself and get it from one account to another.

Other popular services that provide free or low-cost transfers include:

- [Popmoney](#) is offered by banks, and you can set up additional accounts for banks that don't participate in the Popmoney network.
- Square Cash [uses your debit card to transfer](#) money to a different debit card – your own card or somebody else's. Effectively, you move funds from one checking account to another.
- Venmo provides free transfers for personal (not business) use.

Funds Available

Writing a check to yourself can be a handy way to move money safely: there's no need to walk around with cash or pay [wire transfer fees](#) to get funds to another bank. However, it's not a way to *create* money. When you write a check, you need to be sure there will be funds available in the account when the check is deposited. The receiving bank might accept a bad check and add funds to your account, but eventually, the check will bounce. [When that happens](#), you'll have to pay fees, your bank might close your account, and you may even find yourself in legal trouble.

Warning: If you keep an empty account, you're more likely to get dinged with inactivity and low-balance [fees](#) for an account you don't want anyway.

Closing an Account?

Make it official: If you're writing a check to close out an unwanted bank account, you'll need to do more than just empty the account. Ask your bank to close the account so that it doesn't stay open indefinitely ([you can send a letter](#) or possibly make the request online).



BASICS

See How to Send Money to Somebody Online (Local or Overseas)



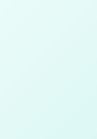
BASICS

Learn How and Where to Deposit Cash to Get Your Money Into the Bank



BASICS

Do I Have to Wait Before I Cash a Check I Just Received?



BASICS

Deposited a Check? Don't Be Too Quick to Spend the Money



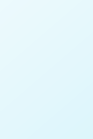
BASICS

Here Are Some Places Where Can You Cash a Check Without Paying Fees



BASICS

The Different Parts of a Check and How to Read It



BASICS

6 Features your Next Bank Account Needs



BASICS

Alternatives to Credit Card Wire Transfers for Sending Money



BASICS

Why You Can't Buy a Money Order With a Check



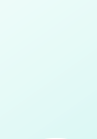
BASICS

Everything You Need to Know About Cashier's Checks



BASICS

Compare and Contrast: Speed, Cost, Safety, and More



BASICS

What Is the Available Balance in Your Bank Account?



BASICS

Opening a New Bank Account? Here's How to Get Prepared and Get It Done



BASICS

How and Where Do You Cash a Money Order, Anyway?



BASICS

Here Is a Look at the Cheapest Ways and Options to Send Money



BASICS

How to Make Payments with a Money Order

the balance Make money personal.

Our Best Money Tips, Delivered

Enter your email...

SIGN UP



Investing

Credit & Debt

Retirement Planning

Banking & Loans

ABOUT US

ADVERTISE

TERMS OF USE

PRIVACY POLICY

COOKIE POLICY

CAREERS

CONTACT

EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

ALSO FROM THE BALANCE TEAM

the balance

small business / the balance

careers