

# IF I HAD \$100: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO INVESTING & BUDGETING FOR YOUNG CANADIANS

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## SO, WHAT IS INVESTING?

It's not just for "finance bros" or the wealthy. Investing is how your money earns while you sleep. Instead of keeping your savings still, you're putting it into places where it can grow — like stocks, ETFs, or funds. And no, you don't need to be rich. You don't even need to be an expert. You just need to start small, stay consistent, and be patient.

## WHERE SHOULD YOU PUT YOUR MONEY?



Here's what I wish someone told me earlier:

- TFSA = your flexible bestie. You can invest or save in it, and any gains are tax-free.
  - RRSP = your future-you vault. Great for retirement or if you earn more (you'll get tax breaks now, and pay taxes later).
  - FHSA = for your first home. It's like a TFSA + RRSP combo, built for saving up for your first house.
- They sound complicated — but they're just envelopes for your money, each with different perks.

## BUT WHY DON'T MORE YOUNG PEOPLE INVEST?

Let's be real: not everyone starts at the same line.

### Barrier

Confusing jargon  
Fear of risk  
Cultural stigma  
Low income  
Mistrust in systems

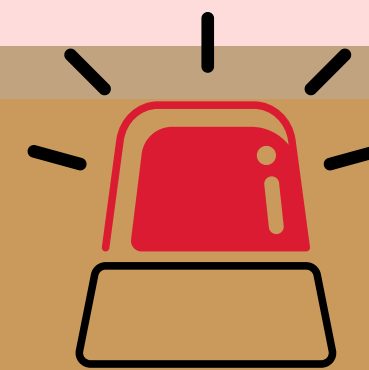
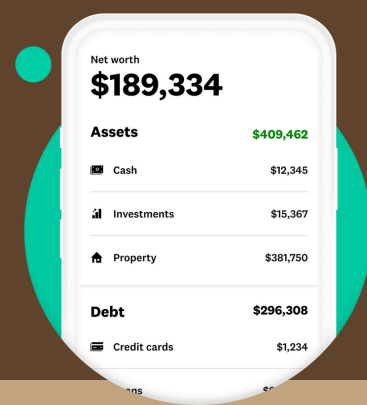
### What That Looks Like

RRSP, TFSA, FHSA all sounds like alphabet soup.  
No one teaches how to weigh risk vs. reward.  
In some families, talking about money is off-limits.  
When you're living paycheque to paycheque, investing seems impossible.  
Not everyone feels banks or advisors are built for them.



## WHAT CAN HELP BRIDGE THE GAP?

- Workshops at school where we created mock budgets with real-life scenarios
- TikToks and YouTube videos by youth creators
- Budgeting apps like Mint or YNAB
- Student-led clubs where we shared savings goals like group workouts
- Free tools from FCAC — like a student budget calculator
- Goal planners — write down short-term and long-term savings



## WHAT ABOUT EMERGENCIES?

The first thing I did when I started taking my money seriously wasn't buying stocks.

It was building an emergency fund.

Because when life throws you a curveball — a cracked phone, sudden dentist visit, or job loss — you want to land on a cushion, not on concrete.

Start with a goal: maybe \$500. Then aim for one month's rent. Even \$25 a week adds up fast. I used automatic transfers so I wouldn't even notice.

## MY BUDGET — REAL AND IMPERFECT

With part-time work and some scholarship support, here's how I manage \$1,800/month:

- \$900 — Rent & Utilities
- \$250 — Food & Transit
- \$80 — Phone & Internet
- \$150 — Fun (yes, bubble tea counts)
- \$100 — Emergency Fund
- \$120 — TFSA or FHSA investing
- \$200 — Extras (gifts, clothes, unplanned stuff)

## SHOULD YOU INVEST ON YOUR OWN?



I tried DIY investing. It was fun — but also risky.

Then I looked into robo-advisors (apps like Wealthsimple that pick low-fee portfolios for you).

Way easier.

If you want someone to talk to and walk you through goals? A financial advisor might be worth it — just watch out for high fees.

What works best? It depends on your comfort level. I started with robo-advisors and slowly added DIY once I learned more.

IF I HAD \$100 NOW, I'D PUT \$50 INTO A TFSA, \$30 INTO MY EMERGENCY FUND, AND USE THE REST TO BUY DINNER WITH A FRIEND WHO HELPED ME LEARN ALL THIS.