



# **Credit Card Relief™**

through  
**The Enrolled Members Trust**



# 2010

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## **A. SIX FINANCIAL FITNESS EXERCISES & B. IDENTITY THEFT**

### **A. Six Financial Fitness Exercises**

#### **1. REALITY TOE TOUCHES**

To stay economically “fit”, we all need to get in better “touch” with *today’s* financial realities. If the “Great Recession” has taught us anything, it is that things can quickly change for the worse without warning. Unless you have money to burn, fretting about what the markets, the economy, interest rates, etc. will all do tomorrow, or next week or next year is a loser’s game. Worry leads to nervousness which leads to anxiety which leads to heartburn – who needs it! Calm those fears by simply making sure you are covered if – when – bad things happen. Start building your safety net today.

#### **2. CAREER CRUNCHES**

Develop an employment back-up plan. When the nation’s economy “tanks”, one of the first areas company’s cut to save money is in personnel. As we have seen in the last couple of years, few people/industries are safe from “job cuts”. So act like you are already job hunting. Evaluate your job’s “permanence level” with a critical eye: is your job safe or tenuous; and if your company started laying off tomorrow, how soon until they get to you? Have another “career” in mind, just in case. Keep your résumé up-to-date all the time. Maintain a current network of contacts within your field. And keep learning – the more you can do, the more you know about your job/industry/company the more valuable you become to your employer.

#### **3. FIRST-STEP STAIR STEPPING**

Concentrate on taking just that first step up the stairway to financial security. Don’t keep worrying about all the things you *should* be doing to become financially secure – you will become overwhelmed which will only cause you to freeze like a deer in headlights, unsure which way to move. Instead, break everything down into small components, manageable tasks – pick one and just do it.....then the next one. It is the equivalent of walking around the block a few times a week versus your telling yourself over and over that you need to lose 10 pounds. Just start walking – the pounds will take care of themselves.

#### **4. PANIC-LESS PUSHUPS**

Don’t over-respond to every little twitch in the market place. Mild recessions have been turned into ‘Great Depressions’ because people panicked when they should have just taken a deep breath and counted to 10. Unless you are a stock broker or a masochist, put down that mouse or remote and stop monitoring the market and economy every hour. Instead, chart your financial course – with safety nets in place – and then stay that course. Adjust your direction and speed only as absolutely necessary.

## 5. SCORECARD SQUATS

And don't keep using last year's scorecard – or the year's before that –for measuring your money's success rate now. Comparing your progress in today's more conservative financial arena against progress made during “boom” times will just lead you to take unnecessary risks with your money in order to reach those same highs of years ago. Make sure your scorecard accurately reflects the current economic climate and adjust your expectations accordingly.

## 6. SIMPLIFICATION YOGA

Trying to stay on top of too many financial details can be overwhelming – all those statements, all those different due dates. It leads to the “forest for the trees” syndrome. Step back, and look at simplifying your finances to reduce the amount of details you actually have to worry about. Do you REALLY need all those store cards and debit cards and gas cards? Of course not. And keep one or two cars instead of three or four. Consolidate your bank accounts. Use direct deposit whenever you can. Pay bills on-line. Less is more!

## B. IDENTITY THEFT

[What to do ... when who you are ... is in someone else's hands!]

What can you do if your identity is stolen? Following the steps below, act quickly and assertively, and keep copies of everything.

1. File a report with local law enforcement. Get a copy of the report for your bank, credit agencies, etc.
2. Request to receive and then complete the “ID Theft Affidavit” from the Federal Trade Commission.
3. Notify your credit card companies (bank cards, store cards, gas cards, etc.). If you report the loss quickly chances are you may not be responsible for any unauthorized charges. (Carefully monitor all future statements you receive.)
4. If your check book is stolen, notify your bank that your accounts may have been compromised. Complete an “Affidavit of Forgery” on unauthorized checks. Close any affected accounts.
5. Report the theft to the fraud unit at just one of the credit reporting agencies. They will notify the other 2 agencies. Request that the agencies “flag” your file for possible fraud. Add a victim's statement to your report stating that your “...identification/cards/checks/etc. were stolen and that you need to be notified by phone to verify all applications for credit.”
6. Consider putting “Security Freezes” on your credit files at all three credit reporting agencies.
7. Ask utility companies (especially cell phone service) to watch for anyone ordering services in your name. Provide them with a “Password” that must be used before any such services are provided.

ID Theft Assistance: FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION [www.consumer.gov/idtheft](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft)  
IDENTITY THEFT RESOURCE CENTER [www.idtheftcenter.org](http://www.idtheftcenter.org)

*(Thanks to the Marion County (Indiana) Prosecutor's Office for the above “Identity Theft” article.)*

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## COMMENTS ~ QUESTIONS

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### Professional Services Department

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Thank you for your trust and confidence in Credit Card Relief™. We look forward to the day when your name is added to our growing list of Credit Card Relief™ graduates.

If you have any questions or problems, do not hesitate to contact the Professional Services Department at 1-866-241-3328.