



TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR CREDIT

Your finances depend on it.

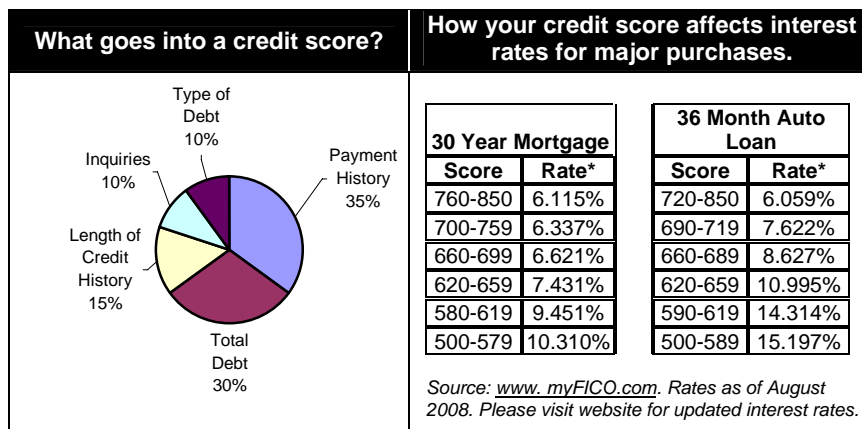
Do credit scores really matter? YES or NO

Can bad credit be repaired? YES or NO

All consumers should check their credit report and their credit scores at least one time per year. Credit is at the root of all lending decisions that affect both you and your families. In fact in today's environment, more than just lenders have access to or use your credit for decision-making purposes.

Take a look at whose looking at your credit

- Landlords
- Banks and credit unions, Car dealerships, Retail stores
- Utility Companies: electricity, heating, water, cell phone, etc.
- Future employers
- Insurance companies
- Existing creditors



Tips on improving your credit score

- Pay your bills on time for the next 24 months.
- Pay down credit cards so that the outstanding balance is 50% or less of the available balance.
- Limit your credit card use by paying cash for items.
- Do not apply for new credit (fill out credit applications) unless necessary.
- Establish a credit history.
- Be patient. It takes 1-2 years to significantly improve your credit score.



Your Credit Resource Center

Where do I get my credit report and credit score?

- www.annualcreditreport.com. Provides one free credit report per year from each of the three credit bureaus. Also provides contact information for the three bureaus. Once you pull your credit report, verify the information and report any errors directly to the credit bureau.
- www.myfico.com. Provides your credit score and resources to determine how to improve it. Fees will apply.

How do I stop all of those credit offers that I did not apply for from coming in the mail?

- Opt-Out of unsolicited offers www.OptOutPrescreen.com

Where can I find more information on credit?

- Contact: Tennessee Department of Financial Institutions, Consumer Resources Division at 1-800-778-4215 or www.tennessee.gov/tdfi

