



Time for Your Annual Checkup

By Tim Hilterman

Many people visit their doctor, dentist, and optometrist on a regular basis to keep track of their health. Similarly, a yearly examination of these five financial items can help ensure you're covering your bases and give you confidence in your future.

1. Net Worth

Defining your net worth doesn't have to be complicated. Start with writing down a value for everything you own (for example: house, cars, bank and investment accounts). These items are your assets. Next, make a list of what you owe (for example: mortgage, loans, credit cards). These are your liabilities. Add up your assets and subtract your liabilities to find your net worth. When you compare your net worth from a year ago, you may find that you've paid down your liabilities and increased your assets!

2. Contributions

While "set it and forget it" can be a good investment strategy, you should examine your contributions at least once a year. Perhaps you can take some of that last raise and bump up your 401(k) contributions by a percent. Or maybe the annual limit for your ROTH IRA has increased and you can add more to it.

3. Beneficiaries

Would you want your 401(k) unintentionally going to your ex-spouse? Or for one of your kids forgotten as a life insurance beneficiary? It's important to make an annual habit of checking the beneficiary of each financial account and life insurance policy.

4. Life Insurance

It's also important to consider how you would leave your loved ones if you passed away. When calculating your need for life insurance, consider how much it would take to replace your income, pay off debts, and accomplish goals such as paying for kids' college. As you get closer to retirement, your need for life insurance may decrease if children have left your house, debts such as mortgages are paid off, and you have investment assets that your beneficiaries can utilize.

5. Your Financial Plan

Most importantly, update your financial plan on a regular basis. Your plan is a comprehensive compilation and projection of your finances. Refreshing this can help you identify potential problem areas in your life. It's easier to make small adjustments now rather than find yourself in an undesirable place down the road.

Whitcomb & Hess advisors have a broad range of expertise. We'd be happy to meet with you for a comprehensive checkup and give you a more confident and peaceful 2024.



Tim Hilterman, CFP®, CAP®
Investment Advisor Representative
419.496.2260
thilterman@whitcomb.com

In This Issue:



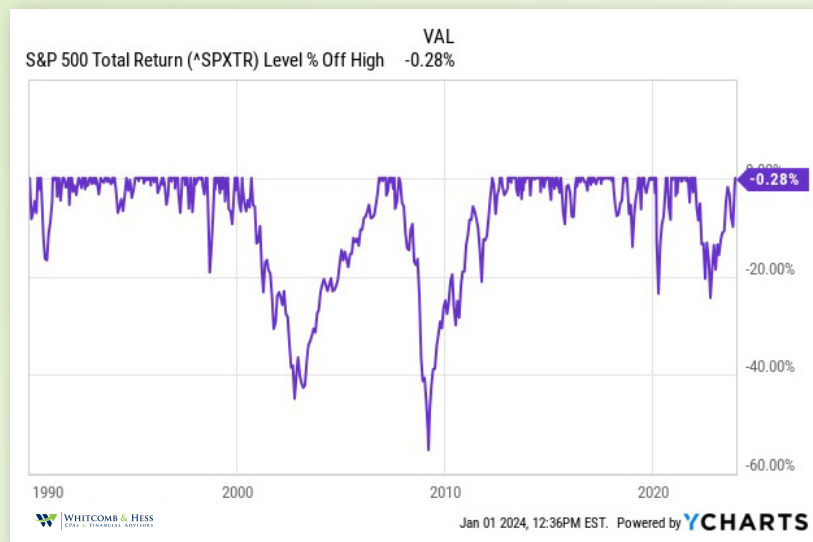
Time for Your Annual Checkup	1	Market Update	3
Quarter 4 Market Recap	2	Fresh Face & Fond Farewell	4
What Ifs vs What We Can Control	3	Save the Date: Shred Day	4

Q4 2023 Market Recap – The Year Of The Comeback

By Ryan Gilmer

On January 4th, 2022, the S&P 500 reached an intraday all-time-high level of 4,818.62. From there, it has taken roughly two years to get back to that point. You may be wondering how this most-recent bear market compares to other historical market declines.

The following graph shows the severity of market declines since January 1, 1990. It tracks the S&P 500 with dividends reinvested. The zero level on the chart indicates periods where the index was at its highest point.



The graph above shows seven times when the S&P 500 fell more than 15% from its highs. This table shows more detail about these periods:

Previous High Date	Days to Market Trough	Days to New High	Total Decline
7/16/1990	87	210	-19.18%
7/17/1998	45	129	-19.19%
9/1/2000	690	2243	-46.22%
10/9/2007	517	1637	-55.25%
9/20/2018	95	204	-19.36%
2/19/2020	33	173	-33.79%
1/3/2022	284	709	-24.35%

A couple of interesting takeaways from this data:

- To date, the S&P 500 has always reached a new high. This means no matter how big or painful the market drop, investors have been rewarded historically for owning stocks over long periods of time.
- Market declines come in various shapes and sizes. Some happen quickly and viciously, taking weeks, while others may take longer to resolve. In the table above, every bear market stopped its decline in under two years, even in 2000 and 2008.
- Investment success requires resilience. Since 2018, the S&P 500 has endured three different periods where it declined by over 19%. Market volatility is a consistent feature of financial markets. Thoughtful investors should have a plan for how to handle the future twists and turns that await.



Ryan Gilmer, CFA®, CMT®
Chief Investment Officer
419.496.2121
rgilmer@whitcomb.com

If you would like to talk about your current investment portfolio is positioned to navigate current markets, please give me a call.

What Ifs vs. What We Can Control

By Chris Nadler and Tracy Wells

When planning for retirement, many investors tend to spend time and energy asking the “what if” questions. What if the market goes down? What if the economy goes into a recession? What if...? While these events can play a part in your retirement plan, focusing on things we have no control over can leave us paralyzed in fear.

As we work with clients, we encourage them to focus on what they can control when it comes to their retirement and future plans.

Here’s what we can control:

- 1) What we save now while working.
- 2) What we plan to spend in retirement. (Do you know how much you are currently spending each month? Most of us want to maintain our current standard of living.)
- 3) When we plan to shift from saving for retirement to using our retirement resources.

The goal is to have a plan in place that makes the most of what you can control, while allowing for those outside events. We have found that this provides reassurance as you make your financial and retirement goals a reality.

Here are a few things to consider while you’re still working:

- Does my company make a matching contribution to my retirement plan? If so, am I at least contributing enough to get the maximum match?
- Am I contributing the maximum amount allowed into my retirement account each year? Or could I save more?

The maximum contribution limits for retirement accounts in 2024 have increased as follows:

2024 Contribution Limits	Under Age 50	Above Age 50
Traditional & Roth IRAs	\$7,000	\$8,000
Simple IRAs	\$16,000	\$19,500
401(k)	\$23,000	\$30,500

If your retirement plan hasn’t been reviewed recently, or you want help in building your retirement plan, we are happy to assist. Together we may find ways to save more now, budget more carefully for later, and figure out the best time to make that transition into retirement.

We appreciate the opportunity to walk and work with you along your journey to retirement and beyond. If you have questions or want to discuss these items further, please let us know.



Chris Nadler, CFP®, CTFA®
Investment Advisor
Representative
419.496.2227
cnadler@whitcomb.com



Tracy Wells
Investment Advisor
Representative
419.496.2225
twells@whitcomb.com

MARKET UPDATE as of 12/31/2023	4rd QTR	2023 YTD	5 YR AVG	10 YR AVG
S & P 500 COMP	11.69%	26.29%	15.69%	12.03%
RUSSELL 2000	14.03%	16.93%	9.97%	7.16%
MSCI EAFE	10.47%	18.85%	8.69%	4.78%
MSCI EMERGING MARKETS	8.09%	12.13%	4.86%	3.39%
BARCLAYS US AGG BOND	6.82%	5.53%	1.10%	1.81%

Disclosure Statement: Please contact Whitcomb & Hess, Inc. if there are any changes in your financial situation or investment objectives, or if you wish to impose, add, or modify any reasonable restrictions to the management of your account. Also, as required by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission, a copy of our Form ADV2A and Form ADV2B: Firm Brochure, which provides information about the qualifications and business practices of Whitcomb & Hess, is available upon request. To request a copy, contact one of our customer service specialists at info@whitcomb.com.

Our Privacy Policy: We limit our employee access to nonpublic personal information to those who need to know this information to provide the best service to you. We do not disclose any nonpublic personal information about our clients or former clients to anyone, except as permitted by law.



WHITCOMB & HESS
CPAS & FINANCIAL ADVISORS

1020 Cleveland Avenue
Ashland, OH 44805

PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE
PAID
MANSFIELD, OH
PERMIT #158

A Fresh Face & A Fond Farewell

By Jordan Kvochick

In the last few months, we've welcomed a new team member on board and had one of our long-time Support Team members retire. Having served with us for exactly 25 years, our bookkeeper **Naomi Chapman** retired on her work anniversary in December. Thankfully, we were able to welcome **Ashley Ferrell** to the team a few weeks prior, so she was able to learn some of the ropes from Naomi. We're excited to have Ashley join us and we wish Naomi all the best on her new adventures!



Top: Naomi Chapman
Bottom: Ashley Ferrell

SAVE THE DATE! SHRED DAY 2024

Friday, May 3rd
9am to 12pm

Have your old documents shredded
in the W&H parking lot

