

Stocks and Shares Investment Advice

In this review I have focused on on-line share tips and advice. I have attempted to put together available reviews of some of the platforms, and will make some comments of my own. Some of the emails I receive are from trading platforms, such as Hargreaves Lansdown, or Bestinvest. In looking at online reviews of them, the comments tend to be about them as a trading platform, rather than their stock-picking advice. With HL, they recommended 5 shares at the start of the year, and provide periodic updates. As a result of these tips, I did top up my holding in Lloyds Bank. The review update below shows them making steady, if unspectacular progress. They also provide sector reviews from time to time.

Another share advice platform I use is Motley Fool. I bought shares in Bunzl on the back of their advice (yet to pay off). The review below puts them top (but to get their full service you would need to pay an annual subscription). The downside of this platform is that they are US based (as is the review below), and most of their tips are geared towards this sector.

I also receive emails from Bestinvest and Yodelar. The latter seem to specialise in providing analytical lists of who are the best performing funds in a certain sector, etc

The following is a review of stock-picking services:

The stock market is one of the best ways to create wealth.

However, it can also be one of the most effective ways to destroy it.

Choosing the right investments is hard. Plus, it's time-consuming to keep up with the market, read earnings reports, and dig through financial statements.

That's where stock picking services come in. These services have teams of experts who do the research and analysis on your behalf. All that's left for you to do is follow their recommendations.

While all these services promise the same thing — great stock picks with low effort on your part — they're not all created equally. And without having firsthand experience with each of them, it can be difficult to determine which one is right for you.

Fortunately for you, testing financial products and services is kind of my thing.

In my opinion, what makes a stock picking service good is its returns, consistency and reliability, and affordability.

I've tried dozens of these services over the years. Here's my list of the 7 best stock picking services as of 2024.

Summary of the best stock picking services

Here's a quick look at my list:

Best overall: [Motley Fool Stock Advisor](#)

1. **Best quant-driven service:** [Alpha Picks](#)
2. **Best for portfolio management:** [The Barbell Investor](#)
3. **Best for a high-caliber team of analysts:** [Moby](#)
4. **Best for disruptive technology:** [Motley Fool Rule Breakers](#)
5. **Best for long-term swing trades:** [Ticker Nerd](#)
6. **Best for medium-term swing trades:** [Zacks Home Run Investor](#)

1. Best overall: Motley Fool Stock Advisor

- **Our rating:**
- **Best for:** Long-term investors
- **Cost:** \$199/year (\$89 for new members through [this link](#))

Ultimately, the best stock picking service is the one that generates the highest returns.

Since its launch in 2002, Stock Advisor has consistently delivered outperforming stock recommendations to its subscribers. Over the last 20+ years, these stock picks have outperformed the S&P 500 by a wide margin according to The Motley Fool site:

While past performance doesn't guarantee future returns, there is no other service that can boast this type of long-term track record.

Brothers Tom and David Gardner launched The Motley Fool with the goal of bringing high-quality investment advice to individual investors. They focus on high-quality, high-growth companies that they plan to hold for 5+ years.

While the results have been outstanding, I do have a complaint about Stock Advisor regarding the amount of risk it suggests you should take. One of the service's primary rules is investing in "25+ companies recommended by The Motley Fool over time."

I don't believe this is an adequate level of diversification, and think around 50% of your stock portfolio should be in index funds (like [VOO](#), Vanguard's S&P500 ETF).

While this extra diversification may lower your returns if the Motley Fool picks are successful, it is also likely to lower your risk significantly.

What you'll get: The Stock Advisor team sends two new stock picks each month with a detailed analysis of each investment.

Additionally, you'll receive access to the team's "Starter Stocks" and "Best Buys Now" lists, educational resources, community features, and all previous recommendations and performance.

You can get the first year of Stock Advisor for \$89 (save \$110) with the link below:

2. Best quant-driven service: Alpha Picks

- **Our rating:**
- **Best for:** Quantitative-based stock picks
- **Cost:** \$499/year (\$449 for new members through [this link](#))

Alpha Picks was launched by Seeking Alpha in July 2022 and is off to an excellent start.

I've been a paying subscriber to [Seeking Alpha Premium](#) for the last five years. It's one of my favorite places to find high-quality investment research from a broad range of contributors.

After finding out about Alpha Picks, which aggregates the research on its platform and combines it with its Quantitative Ratings system, I knew I had to sign up.

At the heart of the Alpha Picks service is its quantitative analysis, which is primarily driven by its Quant Ratings model. This model ranks stocks based on five factors: value, growth, profitability, EPS revisions, and momentum.

After filtering stocks through its models, the Alpha Picks' investment team always makes the final buy/sell/hold decisions. The average holding period will likely be 1–2 years.

What you'll get: Alpha Picks will send you two new stock recommendations per month along with an analysis of why each stock is being selected.

You'll also get complete access to every previous recommendation along with an up-to-the-minute display of every stock's performance and that of the entire portfolio.

3. Best for portfolio management: The Barbell Investor

- **Our rating:**
- **Best for:** Portfolio and money management
- **Cost:** \$150/year

While I'm a fan of the stock picking websites on this list, I have one complaint about the industry in general: nobody shows you what they're doing with their own money.

After reading a detailed report on why I should buy XYZ stock, I'll see this disclosure at the bottom:

“Disclosure: The author has no position in any company mentioned herein.”

In other words, while they're recommending I should buy the stock, they don't have enough confidence in their analysis to invest their own money into it. To me, this is wrong.

So, we did something about it.

We launched [The Barbell Investor](#) to show you exactly how we invest and manage our own money.

No “recommendations” or theory. Just real-life applications with our actual money.

While there is a stock-picking component, the focus of the service is on building a portfolio that gives you the best chance of creating long-term wealth.

What you'll get: 2x per month you'll receive an issue that includes any changes to our portfolios, education on a financial topic, market commentary, and a full report on a stock we're considering buying.

4. Best for a high-caliber team of analysts: Moby

- **Our rating:**
- **Best for:** Many, medium- to long-term investments
- **Cost:** \$199/year (\$99 for new members through [this link](#))

[Moby](#) is a mobile-friendly investment research platform for stock and crypto investors.

Unlike the other services on this list (which only provide 2 new stocks per month), Moby makes 3 new recommendations *per week*.

What sets Moby apart is its team. The team is made up of expert analysts from institutions like Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley.

Every piece of content on Moby – all of its investment ideas, daily market updates, market summaries, and research reports – are written by this team.

However, to keep its content jargon-free and easily accessible to everyone, these ex-Wall Street analysts were paired with journalists who can distill complex financial information into actionable insights.

In addition to the fundamental analysis performed by the team, Moby deploys machine learning and quantitative algorithms to find new investment ideas.

What you'll get: You'll receive 3 new stock picks per week. Each new pick comes with a jargon-free report on why it's being recommended. You'll also get access to Moby's Model Portfolios and suite of other features (Political Trades, Stock Screener, online community, and more).

5. Best for disruptive tech: Motley Fool Rule Breakers

- **Our rating:**
- **Best for:** Long-term investors who want to invest in disruptive technology

- **Cost:** \$299/year (\$99 for new members through [our link](#))

In addition to its flagship newsletter (Stock Advisor), The Motley Fool also launched [Rule Breakers](#) back in the early 2000s.

While it doesn't have near the popularity of Stock Advisor, the returns are similarly impressive according to the website:

While the Stock Advisor team can select any stock it deems to be “high-quality,” the Rule Breakers investment strategy focuses exclusively on disruptive technology companies with the potential to reshape entire industries.

Most of these stocks come with very high valuation multiples, making them high-risk, high-reward investments. As such, the Rule Breakers portfolio tends to be more volatile than the Stock Advisor portfolio.

This leads me to my primary complaint about Rule Breakers, which is the same as it was for Stock Advisor: the service suggests a fairly concentrated portfolio of highly volatile stocks.

While this may lead to outperformance, it's also extremely difficult to stomach.

The above chart may look extremely attractive to you, but you would have had to sustain a ~50% drawdown in 2021. For many investors, this size of loss is too painful to keep holding, so they end up selling their stocks at losses.

If you do want to add Rule Breakers disruptive stocks to your portfolio, blending those stocks with an allocation to broad-market index funds may help to reduce the drawdowns and volatility.

What you'll get: The Rule Breakers service is set up the same way as Stock Advisor's — you'll receive two new stock picks per month with analysis, educational resources, community access, and all previous recommendations and performance.

6. Best for long-term swing trades: Ticker Nerd

- **Our rating:**
- **Best for:** Long-term “swing” trades
- **Cost:** \$199/year (\$99 for new members through [this link](#))

[Ticker Nerd](#) is also a relatively new stock picking advisory service. It was launched in February 2021.

The team uses software to filter stocks based on [analyst ratings](#), social media sentiment, and institutional trading data.

After narrowing the list using these filters, they perform fundamental and technical analysis and provide their readers with only their favorite investments.

Ticker Nerd's investment approach combines the fundamental analysis found in Stock Advisor with the quantitative- and momentum-based analysis used in Alpha Picks.

This approach lends itself to a long-term “swing” trading investing style, in which most picks are held between 3–24 months.

Another small difference is that Ticker Nerd produces one report each month with two stock picks, as opposed to most other services on this list which produce two reports with one stock pick per issue.

The website doesn't have much in the form of performance data, however, so you'll have to start the free trial to see the team's recent picks and how they've performed.

What you'll get: You'll receive one report per month with two stock recommendations and accompanying analysis. You'll also get access to Wall Street analyst ratings for every stock

covered and a database with all prior picks.

7. Best for medium-term swing trades: Zacks Home Run Investor

- **Our rating:**
- **Best for:** Medium-term, quant-based “swing” trades
- **Cost:** \$149/year

Zacks was one of the first companies to popularize quantitative-first investing. While its main site is still focused on providing quantitative research to investors, it launched this done-for-you stock picking service in 2011.

As its name suggests, [Zacks Home Run Investor](#) keys in on under-the-radar, small- and mid-cap companies with large growth runways.

The service is led by Brian Bolan, Zacks' “Aggressive Growth Strategist.” Bolan deploys a combination of Zacks strategies (primarily Zacks Rank) and fundamental analysis.

Unlike every other service on this list, Zacks Home Run Investor does not hide the performance of its individual picks behind a paywall.

You can see all of its closed positions on its site:

Zacks Rank is the primary engine that powers all of Zacks' services.

It uses a scoring system to gauge Wall Street analyst EPS revisions, its primary source of data for ranking stocks. The system is based on four factors: agreement, magnitude, upside, and surprise.

After using the quantitative filters at his disposal, it's up to Bolan to determine which stocks are recommended in each issue.

The site claims the average holding period is 1–2 years, but it averages 2–4 trades per month which leads to a much faster portfolio turnover than it advertises. If you opt for this service, expect to be buying and selling stocks multiple times per month.

What you'll get: You'll receive 2+ stock picks per month and reports on why those stocks are being recommended. You'll also get frequent sell alerts due to the service's relatively high portfolio turnover.

Brian Bolan also shares market commentary, which will keep you updated on the latest developments in the markets.

If you want to be a buy-and-hold, long-term investor and have very few transactions, Zacks Home Run Investor probably isn't the right service for you. Similarly, if you can't stomach volatility, you should probably pass on Rule Breakers.

While many different investing strategies do work, you want to find one that fits well with your personality and makes it easy for you to manage.

When evaluating investing products and services, we take the following into consideration:

- **Core offering:** How good the product or service is — i.e., how its returns have been and how long it has been generating those returns.
- **Cost:** Overall price and value for money.
- **Usability:** What the interface looks like, whether the emails are easy to read and access, design elements and features, and general accessibility.
- **Credibility:** Quality of information as well as company and brand reputation.
- **Audience:** Who the product is for, the uses and applications, whether it actually works, if it's the best option available, and any limitations therein.
- **Offers:** Whether there is a special offer for signing up or any discounts.

Final verdict

Stock picking services can help you save time, provide market education, and help you learn how to build your portfolio.

But while earning high returns might be your goal, choosing the wrong service can have the exact opposite effect.

That's why you should choose one that comes highly recommended, aligns with your investing goals, and is produced by a high-quality company.

If you're having a hard time deciding between a few of the services I mentioned above, don't be afraid to sign up for several and compare them side-by-side.

Most of them offer 30-day money-back guarantees, so you can try them for a month before making a decision.

Or, you can be like me and subscribe to several at once.

Personally — and I've crunched the numbers — I see these costs to be one of the highest ROI subscriptions available.

The following is a more in-depth look at The Motley Fool:

The Motley Fool

The Motley Fool has a rating of 3.07 stars from 323 reviews, indicating that most customers are generally satisfied with their purchases¹. Reviewers satisfied with The Motley Fool most frequently mention long term, rule breakers, and investment advice¹. The Motley Fool is worth it if you want hand-picked stock recommendations delivered to your inbox every month and a wealth of premium research². It's a great resource for newer investors and even DIY investors who want a helping hand with research and stock picks².

If you invest in single stocks, it's not always easy to pick the next winner in the stock market. The Motley Fool is a well-respected [stock picking service](#) with a nearly 30-year track record. According to The Motley Fool website, it has far outpaced the [S&P 500](#). Their Stock Advisor service claims to have beaten that key market index by a factor of four over the last 21 years. Let's take a look at the costs, how it works, and if it makes sense for your investment needs.

Our rating - 4

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The Motley Fool is a stock and investment website. It employs many writers and analysts who constantly comb the market for stock picks and investment ideas. The

flagship product for investors is the **Motley Fool Stock Advisor service**. This paid service gives you access to a more exclusive list of stocks.

- Customers get two new Stock Advisor picks per month.
- Subscriptions [cost \\$99 for the first year](#) (for new members) and then \$199 per year going forward.
- You can try it for the first 30 days and then cancel for a full refund if you're not satisfied.
- At any given time, Stock Advisor customers have access to about 10 recommended stocks.

For investors willing to take a bit more risk, the Rule Breakers subscription costs \$299 per year and focuses on [growth stocks](#). The Fool also offers retirement guidance and resources in its Rule Your Retirement subscription for \$149 per year, but this review focuses primarily on the Stock Advisor subscription.

Brothers David Gardner and Tom Gardner founded The Motley Fool in 1993. The Gardners still run the company from its headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, in the Washington, D.C., area.

The original online launch led to widespread coverage, including [The Wall Street Journal](#) and [The New Yorker](#), and a partnership with then-booming America Online. It did well in the early '90s. But the company suffered significant losses in the fallout of the dot-com market collapse in 2001.

In the years since, however, the company re-found its footing. It expanded to include its own public blog, podcast, and video content, in addition to the [Stock Advisor, Rule Breakers \(here's how they compare\)](#). **Members should look for the two big stock recommendations from The Motley Fool's team of analysts each month.** Also, there are recommended "Best Buys" that could help fill out your portfolio. New recommendations come out every Thursday. and Rule Your Retirement subscriptions.

What do you get with a Stock Advisor membership?

Here are some of the features and access you can expect with your Stock Advisor subscription.

Rankings

In addition to two stock picks per month, as a member, you will also have access to 10 stock picks The Motley Fool thinks are the best investment opportunities within the last month.

Starter Stock

If you are new to investing, The Motley Fool gives members access to their Starter Stock guide that can help a new investor build their first portfolio. It is exclusively offered to Stock Advisor subscribers and is updated annually.

Historical Stock Advisor picks

To prove their numbers, Stock Advisor also lists all previous picks. The Motley Fool service is transparent regarding its stock pick history. Once you have finished creating your account, go to the Performance tab to see every historical Stock Advisor program

recommendation that The Motley Fool has ever made.

Live video discussions

The Motley Fool also holds live video discussions for members about their stock prices and the methodology used when making a Motley Fool stock pick. They share research and answer questions their members have. Subscribers also have access to Motley Fool Live, where they can stay up to date on market news, gain access to special guest interviews, and more.

Stock Profiles

With the Stock Profiles feature, subscribers will find financial data, charts, news, CAPS ratings, and so much more with their Stock Advisor subscription.

Favorites Watchlist

Stock Advisor also has a Favorites Watchlist where members can add the stock recommendations to their list as a stock they own or one they want to watch. This feature makes it much easier to see all your stocks in one place outside of the brokerage account.

Simulator tools

With access to simulator tools, investors can help model different approaches they can use to invest. For example, one tool shows the Probability of Positive Returns. Based on what you enter, the simulator will tell you the likelihood of a positive return based on the Stock Advisor's past performance.

Allocation tools

Allocation tools help with portfolios. You can set your risk tolerance, and the allocation tool offers a sample for bonds, cash, stocks, ETFs, and mutual funds.

Special reports library

The Motley Fool analyzes trends and finds stocks that will profit from these trends. With your Stock Advisor subscription, you will gain full access to these reports.

Motley Fool community

Finally, you will have access to a very active investment community online to discuss investment strategies, tools, education, and official monthly stock picks.

The Motley Fool's track record

Most of The Motley Fool stock picks do make money. Stock Advisor is beating the S&P by more than four times and Stock Advisor recommendations have returned over 657% as of 3/11/24.

The Motley Fool recommends several large and mid-cap stocks and very few small-cap stocks. Members are encouraged to fully invest in high-quality stocks over the long term.

This [long-term investing](#) view is also the view we generally take, and it's nice that The Motley Fool recommends high-quality companies that are generally long-term holds.

Is Motley Fool Stock Advisor worth it?

The Motley Fool is worth it if you want hand-picked stock recommendations delivered to your inbox every month and a wealth of premium research. It's a great resource for newer investors and even DIY investors who want a helping hand with research and stock picks.

As you can tell from this review, we are pretty positive about The Motley Fool Stock Advisor paid subscription. I've tried some competing services that cost more than double. Motley Fool offers a good balance of interesting investment ideas at a reasonable rate, making it a good value for investors of all skill levels.

Beginner to intermediate investors can learn a lot from reading the details behind each stock pick. More experienced investors can use that information as fodder when making their own investment decisions.

If you just [dollar-cost average](#) your way into various [index funds](#) and ETFs, the Motley Fool might not be worth it since you're not trading stocks as often. But again, its premium research is pretty solid.

I have experience managing part of a university endowment fund and seven-figure portfolios, and I have a few stocks from The Motley Fool in my own portfolio. Some are doing great. Some are doing so-so. But on average, they have done well enough to pay for the subscription cost and leave me with a nice little profit.

Why am I talking about myself here? Well, if someone like me with two finance degrees, portfolio management experience, and all day to sit on the computer thinking about money found value from The Motley Fool, you will likely find it worthwhile as well.

Is The Motley Fool safe and legitimate?

The pushy advertising style at The Motley Fool sometimes makes it feel like a used car lot, but overall, The Motley Fool is a safe and legitimate investing service. I'm a member myself and have been very happy with the service overall. And The Fool has plenty of free resources and articles you can consume if you're not ready to subscribe quite yet.

If you read all of the service's investor education content, they even go so far as to admit that some of their investments won't work out as planned. They proudly show off their winners but don't hide their losers. I wouldn't follow their portfolios exactly, but their recommendations are a good data point in building your own investment strategy around individual stocks.

Some have gone so far as to question: Is Motley Fool a pump and dump scheme? A pump and dump scheme is when someone attempts to boost the price of a stock based on false, misleading, and often exaggerated statements.

The Motley Fool is definitely not a pump and dump scheme. It is a respected investor service and they provide links to their research. While its large member base may influence stock prices immediately after announcements, leading to some opportunities for market manipulation, The Motley Fool itself operates on the up-and-up. If you want to learn more about pump and dump schemes, check out movies like *Boiler Room* or *The Wolf of Wall Street*.

Who should subscribe to The Motley Fool Stock Advisor?

The Motley Fool is best for people who are interested in semi-active trading. This is especially true if you are a brand new investor or want to learn more about [picking individual stocks](#) instead of [exchange-traded funds \(ETFs\)](#) or [mutual funds](#), this service is an excellent resource with a reasonable price tag.

When I dropped in for the first time, I saw a list of stocks that I was most familiar with, and a few that were new to me. But I probably know more companies than the average person, since I'm a finance writer. Of the 11 stocks presented, I had actually considered two of the stocks myself at different times.

Expert investors who like finding their own stocks and passive investors who prefer to buy and hold diverse funds should skip this service. And The Motley Fool has other services that cater to different sectors and goals, like [real estate investing](#) or retirement income, that might be better fits.

Stock Advisor vs. other The Motley Fool services

The big difference between the Stock Advisor service and other services is performance. Stock Advisor and Rule Breakers focus on [stock picks](#), and both The Motley Fool services offer diversification, but stock picks have proven to be the star. Everlasting Portfolio is another The Motley Fool service, but it focuses more on the whole portfolio.

What's nice about The Motley Fool is that it keeps up very well with the times. It's launching a new [crypto investing](#) service, and it covers plenty of other sectors like energy, cloud computing, and AI.

Many services are more expensive than Stock Advisor, which is why we largely think Stock Advisor is a great starting point for new investors getting into the Fool's ecosystem. As you learn more about investing or want to invest more, you can consider some of its more niche offerings.

Does The Motley Fool offer other investment and financial guidance?

With The Motley Fool's premium service offerings, you can find out their latest recommendations, stock tips, and the latest investing trends. When it comes to Motley Fool options and financial guidance, The Motley Fool is designed to benefit investors and show them how to make the most out of every opportunity.

Everlasting Portfolio is a premium investing service that includes two new stock pick recommendations each month. Tom specifically has a personal interest in these recommendations for the Everlasting portfolio. The Everlasting Portfolio price is \$2,999 per year, but they often run promos where the price can come down to as much as \$1,599 per year.

The Motley Fool customer service

Members can contact The Motley Fool customer service reps at 877-629-2589 during business hours, Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm EST. Subscribers also have the option to receive SMS stock alerts. You can also email the customer service team through

the contact form on the company's website.

Stock Advisor pros and cons



Pros

- **Weekly stock recommendations with expert analysis:** Get a weekly stock pick from a market expert with a proven track record.
- **Relatively affordable annual cost compared to some investment services:** The service for new members is \$99 for the first year and \$199 for future years. That translates to \$8.25 per month for the first year and \$16.58 per month for future years.
- **Text and email alerts give you quick information:** Opt-in for alerts via email and text message to avoid missing an announcement.
- **Active community:** The Fool boards are incredibly active, and it's an overall friendly, welcoming community of like-minded investors where you can easily spark up a conversation about different stocks or investing philosophies.



Cons

- **Upselling:** The site is heavy on sales and uses strong marketing language to try to sell you additional subscriptions.
- **No stock recommendation is guaranteed:** While The Motley Fool team has outperformed the markets overall, not every stock they suggest is a winner.
- **Recommendations can move the market:** Stock prices can temporarily spike after a new recommendation comes out, which might lead you to buy at a higher price if you're not careful.

• Final thoughts on The Motley Fool Stock Advisor

Most investors shouldn't put their entire portfolio into the suggestions of any single stock picking service (It's better to [learn how to invest in stocks](#)). However, this service has a good reputation and a strong track record of success among stock subscriptions.

In my opinion, the stocks in the current portfolio as of this writing are logical and sound. Of course, there's never any guarantee of future performance, but the advisor tends to do well overall.

If you're up for a subscription service that costs \$199 per year, the introductory deal is an excellent way to test the waters. With a lower \$99 fee (for new members) for the first year and the 30-day membership-fee back guarantee, you can take a risk-free look behind the scenes to decide if it's right for you.

Bestinvest is a long-standing [investment platform](#) that offers access to a range of funds and shares. Their acquisition by Tilney has led to the added benefit of free financial coaching with a qualified financial planner which could be appealing for novice investors and those looking to broaden their knowledge.

Deciding between UK trading platforms too often requires a trade-off between cost and value. In many ways, Bestinvest is no exception to this rule. Bestinvest is a mid-sized investment platform with around £2.7 billion in assets under management. Because it's a part of the Tilney Group, you enjoy access to products and services that you won't otherwise get with budget investment platforms, such as three management options for your SIPP account.

At the same time, there are some core features of a standard investment platform that Bestinvest skips, which impact whether or not you should stay with Bestinvest long-term. Without question, the Bestinvest SIPP is the platform's most attractive product, particularly for new investors and those just getting started with retirement planning. But is it worth starting or transferring an ISA here, too? My Bestinvest review answers these questions and more.

Pros

- Good customer service options available
- Competitive ISA product
- Transfer fees are covered by BestInvest

Cons

- Lack of tools available for comprehensive share dealing
- Lack of transparency when it comes to fees

Their fees are a little higher than some stockbrokers but their pricing structure is simple and easy to understand. BestInvest may also not be the best option if you like to be in full control of where your investments are held. Nevertheless, it is the perfect choice for people who don't have hours upon hours to spend researching tracker funds and instead just want to start putting some cash away for their future.

They have a wealth of blog posts and tutorials to familiarise users with all the lingo when it comes to investments and provide useful tools for calculating how much your money could be worth in the next decade.

BestInvest is available on both iOS and android and you can get signed up in just a few minutes.

Who is Bestinvest?

Bestinvest is an online investment platform, offering a range of funds as well as stocks and shares. In 2011 Bestinvest launched its service for DIY investors, offering a trading account as well as a range of ISAs and a self-invested personal pension.

Who owns Bestinvest?

Bestinvest was founded by John Spiers in 1986 so is one of the longer-established platforms out there. In 2014 the platform merged with Tilney and rebranded as Tilney Group in 2017, and is now known as Bestinvest by Evelyn Partners, a trading name of Evelyn Partners Investment Management Services Limited.

Product Range

A quick review of the website shows that Bestinvest offers a simple range of tax-efficient products including:

- Stocks and Shares ISA
- Junior ISA
- SIPP
- General Investment Accounts

Using a platform that offers both tax-wrapper products and a general investment account means you can maximise your tax-free investments and put the excess in the market without opening and learning multiple providers' systems. It's a valuable proposition if you don't have a huge amount of time to dedicate to monitoring your investments. However, as you'll see elsewhere, Bestinvest doesn't have the kind of tools required to get knee-deep in share dealing through an investment account. As a result, the value proposition is a bit muddled in terms of execution.

Research Services & Tools

Even though Bestinvest focuses on providing an investment platform for easy-to-use tax-free accounts, it provides a decent range of education for investors, particularly those with basic financial literacy who want to grow their knowledge.

For example, their investment guide covers subjects like:

- How to find stocks poised to outperform
- How to find companies paying dividends
- How to find green and sustainable funds

Bestinvest also provides customer-facing documents that help you parse funds, portfolios, and even help you "Spot the Dog" (i.e, the worst-performing funds).

You aren't going to get much in the way of charts and tools, which limits your ability to take advantage of the DIY options offered. Generally speaking, the technical side of the service is lacking. However, you do get easily digestible and regularly updated guides and posts to help you become a more confident novice investor.

Keep in mind that none of the content the team produces constitutes formal financial advice. If you need help with retirement planning tailored to your financial history, then you need to seek financial advice from an independent financial adviser.

But if you would rather keep everything in one place, you don't actually need to go far to find advice. Here's where the relationship with Tilney becomes valuable: the connections allow you to choose the Bestinvest Plus service for expert advice from an adviser.

Bestinvest Plus is a free service available to walk you through your finances and learn more about what's available to you through

the platform. The service offers recommendations on the Bestinvest ready-made portfolio products – not dealing. So, if you're completely new to investing and have an interest in the ready-made products, you can get some initial help to get you started.

Fees & Charges

Bestinvest UK accounts come with tiered account fees.

If you want an ISA, Investment Account, Junior ISA or SIPP, you'll pay:

- 0.2% on up to £500,000
- 0.1% on £500,000 to £1 million
- Free over £1 million

Keep in mind that you'll still need to pay fund fees, which vary by product. It's worth noting that BestInvest's fees are much cheaper than Nutmeg and Wealthify, who charge up to

0.75% and 0.6% respectively and depending on your portfolio choice.

If you're interested in an Investment Account, then you'll also pay share dealing fees on £4.95 per trade. The good news: buying and selling funds is free. You still need to pay fund charges, which is par for the course.

Keep in mind that you still need to consider Stamp Duty as well as potential ongoing fund charges.

It's a bit disappointing that Bestinvest doesn't make it simple to see how much your account will cost you before you get set up. Several of its competitors like Nutmeg use graphs and charts to help you actualise the true cost of the management fees. It's a small quibble, but it demonstrates a lack of thoughtfulness around the user experience.

All in: the fees offered by Tilney Bestinvest won't make or break you, but the **SIPP fees are very competitive**. I like the use of the tiered fee based on the value of your portfolio as they tend to be more cost-effective compared to fixed annual fees. However, you should always compare fees based on your investment strategy.

Non-Leveraged products

Bestinvest offers two non-leveraged products: ISAs and SIPPs.

Leveraged products

Because of the tax-efficient nature of these investments, you can't use leveraged funds within an ISA or SIPP portfolio.

You don't have the option to invest in leveraged products with a Bestinvest account.

It's unclear whether Bestinvest's general investment account offers any access to leveraged products.

Bestinvest ISA

Bestinvest offers both a Stocks and Shares ISA and a Junior ISA. When you open an ISA account, you have access to over 2,500 funds, UK shares, ETFs, and investment trusts. One of the ways Bestinvest differs from other low-cost platforms is that you have the option to choose between Bestinvest ready-made portfolios and the option to choose your own investments.

You can choose from one of seven ready-made portfolios on your own or ask Bestinvest for help through the Bestinvest Plus service. According to the provider, the Tilney Group investment team create Bestinvest's portfolios as well as the portfolios for the Tilney wealth management services.

The ready-made portfolios include:

- Maximum Growth
- Adventurous
- Growth
- Balanced
- Defensive
- Ethical
- Income

Ready-made portfolios also enjoy management from the Bestinvest team. Yes, you do add on an additional fee that can bring your annual costs up towards 2%. However, you do get professional management in exchange for the fee.

The Bestinvest ISA product is competitive, even when you factor in the increased fund management fees should you choose to go that route. The annual management fee is only 0.4% for accounts under £500,000 compared to the 0.5-0.75% fee offered by the competition.

Overall, I like the number of investment portfolios, and the growth portfolio is a strong offering that does beat competitors like Hargreaves Lansdown in some respects.

If you're not interested in the ready-made portfolios, then there are tools that make investing fairly straightforward. The Investment Selector allows you to compare funds without opening a dozen tabs, and the range of informal educational tools does cater well to fund investing.

SIPP

Bestinvest's SIPP product is an award-winning pension and probably the platform's biggest draw.

Bestinvest promises value for money through tiered service fees, three investment strategies, and a plethora of customer service options in case you get stuck.

You'll quickly find that the product is called the Best SIPP. It seems to be both a play-on-words and a very clever marketing tool.

The big standout feature is the option to choose a fully-managed portfolio, work with an investor, or do it all yourself. A DIY SIPP is achievable because while the fee is average, you can invest in funds without paying fund dealing charges, which could save you a great deal when compared with other providers.

It's uncommon to find all three options within one low-cost investment provider. So, if you have a dream of one day controlling your own pension, then Tilney Best Invest makes it possible.

Be warned: you have to participate in lead generation to get further information about the SIPP product. The guides are available via email and providing your phone number is mandatory. So if you're just shopping around, you'll need to go back and update your marketing preferences afterwards.

The Bestinvest SIPP is considered by some to be the flagship product, and it's not hard to see why. Many of the same rules and tools apply to both the ISA and SIPP accounts. But the SIPP product is known to be substantially cheaper than many other SIPPs on the market, particularly for those just getting started. Again, the free fund dealing is a huge bonus for new investors. And if you are interested in share dealing, then the prices are on par with other providers: £4.95 seems to be the standard charge.

Bestinvest also offers some pension options designed for new investors that aren't part and parcel of the low-cost SIPP landscape. For example, you can schedule a free telephone pension review with Bestinvest advisors to review your pension and its growth, which is a great service. The free advice includes reviewing your fees, double-checking your investments, and ensuring you're making the most of allowances. Again, it's not free financial advice, but it does help you prevent simple mistakes that could damage your retirement goals. They'll even help you if you don't have all your pension paperwork or it's a mess.

All in, it's not hard to see why the SIPP is so well-reviewed and continues to win awards. You do get real value if you're just starting out and you get it at a cost that's substantially lower than other providers.

Opening an Account

You can open an account online with your email address, National Insurance number, and your debit card or bank details to fund the payment.

If you get stuck, you can phone Bestinvest on 020 7189 9999.

Transferring Your Investments to Bestinvest

Transferring your investments to BestInvest is straightforward. Once you create your BestInvest account, you can provide your current investment account details to initiate the transfer.

In most cases, BestInvest arranges an electronic ISA transfer with your current provider. The process usually takes 5-30 days depending on your existing provider.

Unlike other providers, like Nutmeg, BestInvest doesn't cover any transfer fees. If your existing provider charges you money to leave your account, you are responsible for eating the cost.

Customer Service

The ability to get in touch with your investment provider is always important, particularly in times of volatility.

Unlike other providers, Bestinvest has a complete FAQ section that covers not only the basics, like adding money and withdrawing from your account, but it also covers questions on jargon, investing, and dealing. You'll also find information on transfers, transactions, and basic security measures.

Useful information

This section contains some useful information to help make your experience at BestInvest as seamless as possible.

How to contact Bestinvest

If you have more questions and you can't find the answers in the help section, you have multiple ways to get in touch:

- Phone Bestinvest on 020 7189 9999
- Request a call back from the team
- Send an email
- Chat to them via online support

The range of customer service options sets it apart from other providers because it allows you to be proactive. The callback feature is particularly helpful and means you avoid yet another half an hour on hold.

Who is Bestinvest Suitable for?

Bestinvest is suitable for new and intermediate investors who are still growing their portfolio. Because they cover exit fees from other providers, it's also a suitable place to move any languishing or forgotten existing SIPP or ISA accounts.

Bestinvest FAQs

Is Bestinvest safe?

Yes, Bestinvest are now owned by the well respected Evelyn Partners and are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Do Bestinvest support automatic monthly savings into a fund?

Yes, this can be easily set up on the monthly savings page within the platform interface. Simply click 'Add new monthly investment' and select investment.

Yodelar

Yodelar has a high standard of fund knowledge and financial advice coupled with good communication and customer service¹². They have received excellent reviews on Trustpilot³. One user has been managing their own investment portfolio for a number of years using a number of tools and reports from Trustnet and Citywire to pick their funds and trusts, and found Yodelar to be a great tool for the independent investor⁴.

Yodelar is a financial platform that provides a range of services to help users manage their finances and investments. Here are some ways Yodelar can assist you:

1. Investment Insights: Yodelar offers research and analysis on various investment opportunities, helping you make informed decisions about where to invest your money.

2. Portfolio Tracking: You can track your investment portfolios, monitor performance, and receive alerts when changes occur.
3. Financial Education: Yodelar provides educational content on personal finance, investment strategies, and market trends.
4. News and Updates: Stay up-to-date with financial news, market updates, and economic developments through Yodelar's curated content.
5. Tools and Calculators: Yodelar offers tools such as retirement calculators, risk assessment, and budgeting tools to assist you in managing your finances effectively.

Reviews from investors:

It's not really something you need to pay for, as you can find things like:

- 1,3 & 5 yr Performance of more than 3,000 funds
- Fund Ranking of each fund within their sector
- 1-5 star performance rating applied to each fund

...available for free with sites like Trustnet.com and Morningstar.co.uk

When you are using something like Trustnet you can build your own interactive performance charts across different date ranges, add funds to a chart of another fund, compare the correlation and volatility of funds against each other etc.

Usefully when you are looking at a chart for a fund on Trustnet you are not restricted to a pretty picture of the last five years while funds were mostly going up; you can change the date range to go back to earlier periods and see how the fund did in the crashes of 2000-03 or 2007-9, then strong recovery and then dip in 2011 etc.

There's nothing in the marketing bumph from Yodelar to suggest that their analysis goes back further than just the last five years when comparing your chosen funds to others in their respective sector. Yet investing is for the long term. And of course you can get 'reviews' of funds all over the internet (including on the investment platforms that sell them or from the people that manage them) or discussion on discussion forums like this.

So, I haven't paid for a trial (which I would risk forgetting to cancel the monthly payment) to have them tell me that a particular fund happened to beat the fund of my choice over the last year. When this provider had been mentioned here in the past, there hasn't been much enthusiasm. E

Following 25yr managing my own fund based investments, I hit the buffers. Eventually, I turned to Yodelar to blend my high risk, ESG, global and US primary interests + a whole lot of other vehicles!

To date, I have found their customer service and investment advice/performance to be most satisfactory.

I had issues with the length of time it took moving from St James's Place to Yodelar. The Team at Yodelar went above and beyond to help me. I also got my exit penalties reduced under their direction and advice. Their perseverance in helping with my case was outstanding.

I am a retired IFA and use Yodelar for their information services only. If you need advice I would have no problem encouraging investors to give them a try. They go to an enormous amount of effort to know which funds perform and which do not, even at the dismay of some large industry players.

Hargreaves Lansdown

Lloyds – more to come?

Lloyds Banking Group plc LLOY
51.57p
1.26%

We've been pleased with [Lloyds'](#) performance so far this year.

Fourth-quarter results back at the end of February were decent and a confident medium-term outlook has helped improve sentiment.

Strong underlying profit performance was largely because of the release of credit impairments back into the profit line. This was driven by a better economic outlook and a single-name creditor paying back a hefty chunk of debt.

The main spanner in works comes from the FCA's investigation into the potential mis-selling of motor finance.

Lloyds has set aside £450mn in preparation for potential fines which was less than some had feared. But there will be questions around how that figure has been chosen and the outcome is largely unknown.

What we do know is that it's one of the more exposed banks – something to keep an eye on.

There are still several tailwinds yet to play out that could give room for upside beyond the current consensus. Loan default levels remain low and with the return of real wage growth, plus a stabilising housing market, consumers should remain resilient.

At the same time, banks are seeing easing conditions in the mortgage market and what looks to be a peak in terms of consumers shifting to higher-cost savings accounts.

As these tailwinds ease, the power of the structural [hedge](#) can come through – the easiest way to picture the hedge is like a [bond](#) portfolio. Banks use some of their assets to create a portfolio of bonds and earn a stream of cash flows at a fixed interest rate. As rates in the real world go up and down, the hedge helps limit the impact of rate [volatility](#) and smooths earnings. Lloyds remains well placed to benefit from these improving trends.

Whilst we appreciate that our platform charges aren't the cheapest, we feel they reflect good value for money considering the service we provide.

For example, our dealing charges start at £11.95 and can be as little as £5.95 depending on the number of deals you placed the previous month. We've also negotiated reduced annual management charges on a large number of funds at the benefit of our clients.

Always found dealing on the HL platform quick and easy - and good value for money. App and on-line work seamlessly together.

Setting up for US shares was easy too, although it's taken a while to (not) get an answer on some specific Canadian stocks, so this could be improved.

Overall, an easy, value for money platform for a casual private investor.

The platform's standard fee is not the cheapest in the market (0.45%), + the £12/deal with funds or ETF makes it not competitive if buying/selling less than £2000-£3000/deal. The web design could be improved as well. On the bright side, it provides educational articles and a wide array of investment instruments.

Hargreaves Lansdown (HL) aims to offer a premium service, with extensive research, customer support and choice of investments. However, this comes at a price, as HL charges one of the higher platform and trading fees among the mainstream providers.

Pros

- Percentage-based platform fee may suit lower-value portfolios
- One of widest range of investments
- Comprehensive research offering
- Extensive customer support
- Lifetime ISA available
- Pays interest on cash balances

Cons

- Platform fee more expensive for higher-value portfolios
- High trading fee for shares
- One of higher foreign exchange fees on non-UK shares
- No cryptocurrency trading

Hargreaves Lansdown (HL) charges one of the higher percentage-based platform and share trading fees among the mainstream providers, although it does not charge a fee for buying and selling funds.

Investors benefit from a wide range of over 13,000 investments including shares, funds, exchange-traded funds (ETFs) and investment trusts. HL also offers a good choice of ready-made portfolios and a shortlist of selected funds.

HL provides a high level of customer support, with phone support available six days a week, in addition to email and secure messaging. It also excels in terms of the quality and extent of its research together with comprehensive educational tools, including live webinars.

HL pays interest on uninvested cash balances in trading accounts, individual savings accounts (ISAs) and Self-Invested Personal Pensions (SIPPs). However, it does not currently provide a community trading forum for investors.

What plans are available?

HL offers one main plan for customers across its range of accounts, including a general dealing account, ISA, Lifetime ISA and SIPP.

What products are available?

- general trading account
- ISA
- Lifetime ISA (LISA)
- SIPP
- Junior ISA
- active cash savings account

What are the investment choices?

HL offers the choice of over 13,000 investments, including:

- Over 7,500 shares from North America and Europe
- Over 3,900 funds
- Over 1,400 exchange-traded funds (ETFs)
- Over 400 investment trusts

What else does HL offer?

•**Ready-made portfolios:** the choice of four ready-made portfolios, selected and managed by its in-house team. Investors can choose from cautious, balanced, moderately adventurous and adventurous portfolios. Each of the portfolios contains a selection of HL and third party funds, across different assets classes including equities, bonds and property.

•**HL Portfolio Building Blocks:** seven HL-managed ‘funds of funds’, comprising a global corporate bond, strategic bond, UK income, UK growth, European, US and Asia and Emerging Markets fund.

•**HL Select Funds:** three funds focused on a small number of stocks with long-term growth potential, split by UK income, UK growth and global growth.

•**Wealth Shortlist:** a selection of over 70 active and passive funds for investors, chosen using criteria such as performance, cost and investment strategy.

•**Education:** HL offers one of the most extensive educational offerings amongst the platforms, with investing guides and webinars. It also provides comprehensive research and excels in its coverage of individual companies.

•**Apps:** HL's investing app is available on both Android and iOS devices.

•**Security:** HL is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) in the UK. The company uses third party banks and custodians to hold customers' funds, which provides protection for customers in the event that the company went into liquidation.

What about fees and charges?

HL charges the following fees for its three main accounts:

	Dealing account	ISA	SIPP
	Shares: No charge. Funds (tiered): 0.45% (0-£250,000), 0.25% (£250,000-£1 million), 0.10% (£1 million-£2 million), free (£2+ million)	Shares: 0.45%, capped at £45 per year. Funds (tiered): 0.45% (0-£250,000), 0.25% (£250,000-£1 million), 0.10% (£1 million-£2 million), free (£2+ million)	Shares: 0.45%, capped at £200 per year. Funds (tiered): 0.45% (0-£250,000), 0.25% (£250,000-£1 million), 0.10% (£1 million-£2 million), free (£2+ million)
Platform fee			
Trading fee (shares, based on trades in previous month)	Shares: £11.95 (0-9), £8.95 (10-19), £5.95 (20+)	Shares: £11.95 (0-9), £8.95 (10-19), £5.95 (20+)	Shares: £11.95 (0-9), £8.95 (10-19), £5.95 (20+)
Trading fee (funds)	No charge	No charge	No charge
Regular investing	No charge	No charge	No charge
Dividend	No charge	No charge	No charge

	Dealing account	ISA	SIPP
reinvestment			
<p>Other fees include a foreign exchange fee on non-sterling trades of 1.0% (for transactions up to £5,000). The above trading fees are online only and a fee of 1% is charged for dealing over the phone (subject to a £20 minimum and £50 maximum).</p> <p>Be mindful that investments in a currency other than sterling are exposed to currency exchange risk. Currency exchange rates are constantly changing which may affect the value of the investment in sterling terms. You could lose money in sterling even if the stock price rises in the currency of origin. Stocks listed on overseas exchanges may be subject to additional dealing and exchange rate charges, and may have other tax implications, and may not provide the same, or any, regulatory protection as in the UK. In addition, HL recently removed its trading and platform fees on its junior ISA, making this one of the cheapest options available on the market.</p> <h3>Who should choose HL?</h3> <p>HL's platform fee may attract some investors with smaller-value portfolios where a percentage-based (rather than fixed) fee may be a lower-cost option. It may also appeal to customers who are willing to pay more for a premium service.</p> <p>With more than 13,000 investments to choose from, it's also likely to suit those with a wide investment scope. It also has a research and educational offering for both beginners and more experienced investors.</p> <h3>How does HL rank on customer service?</h3> <p>Research firm Fairer Finance gives HL an overall customer experience rating of 66%, split as follows: customer happiness (63%), customer trust (60%), complaints performance (77%) and transparency rating (64%).</p>			