MANAGING INVESTMENTS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Understanding volatility

"Volatility" is an investment term for when the stock market experiences periods of unpredictable, and sometimes sharp, rises and falls.

People often think about volatility only in connection with dramatic drops in prices, but it can also refer to sudden rises as well. So it's really just a way of describing a market that's going through some turbulence.

Volatility is caused by a wide range of economic and political factors, from news affecting a particular industry sector to government policy changes and political tensions or upheavals. Anything that creates uncertainty and causes some investors to sell and others to buy can lead to volatility.

In a volatile market, prices aren't always an accurate reflection of real worth. A sudden swing up or down can make an investment suddenly seem worth more or less than it really is over the long term.

Volatility is normal.

Volatility is inevitable in a healthy market, and every long-term investor will experience it from time to time.

Changes in the prices of stocks are natural in a functioning market. The value of individual companies can go up and down over time as their particular industries become more or less important, and as policies and governments change every few years.

So it's important to be comfortable with the idea of seeing the market change.

Being prepared for volatility at the start of an investment journey means you are less likely to be surprised by short-term events, and more likely to stay focused on your long-term goals.

An advisor can also be an excellent sounding board and a voice of reason who could potentially help you make decisions based on what is best for your long-term plan.

Keep a cool head.

When you see a sudden change in the stock market, you might feel tempted to rush into buying or selling stocks, either to ride a wave of growth or minimize your losses.

But instinctive reactions don't always make for sound financial decisions. By acting too quickly, you're more likely to make costly mistakes, like selling low or buying high.

It's important to keep a cool head when the market is volatile, and avoid being distracted by your emotions. Consider working with a financial advisor to help you create and follow a disciplined investment process to avoid these emotional decisions.

HOW EMOTIONS CAN LEAD YOU ASTRAY

Please note that this information is for illustration purposes only and is a representation of what's happened in a developed market.

Source: Fidelity Investments Canada ULC. As at March 31, 2022. Data shown for S&P 500 Index. Returns are in U.S. dollars. The S&P 500 or Standard & Poor's 500 Index is a market capitalization-weighted index of the 500 largest U.S. publicly traded companies.

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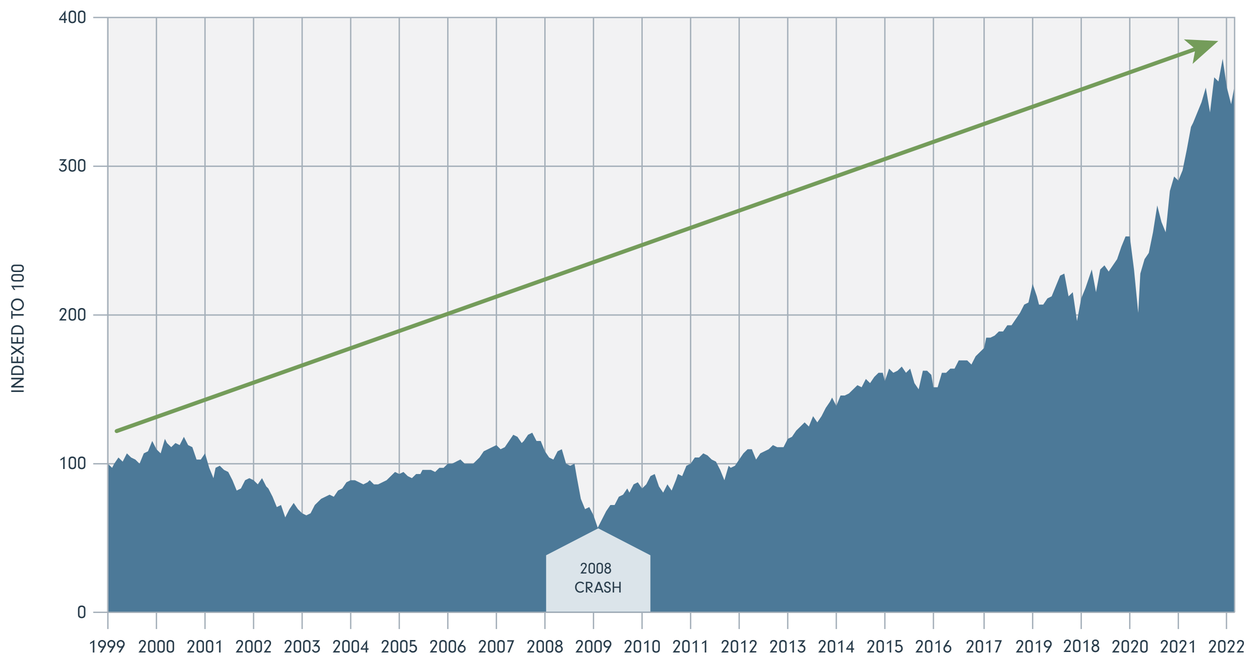
Time in the market

Probably the single most important principle of investing is that the longer you hold an investment, the more likely it is to deliver a positive return.

> Historical data suggest that while most markets will experience periods of short-term volatility, over the long term they will maintain a steady upwards path.

By moving too quickly to get rid of assets, you may run the risk of missing out on seeing your investments recover from falls, and even grow in value. Though past performance is not a guide to the future, staying invested can be a way to capture as much growth from the market as possible.

GROWTH AND RECOVERY



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The value of diversity

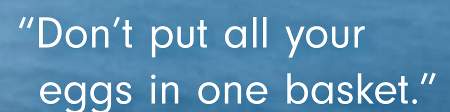
When it comes to investing, diversity is about not having all your eggs in one basket.

Some investments will always be more risky than others, and different sectors and market areas experience periods of volatility at different times.

Certain industries that are either very dynamic, like technology, or heavily regulated and scrutinized, like oil and gas, can experience periods of volatility quite frequently.

Similarly, geopolitical events can lead to local or regional uncertainties in different parts of the world, and cause their own pockets of volatility.

By maintaining a spread of investments across different sectors and market areas, investors can minimize the effect of volatility across their whole investment portfolio and help deliver a smoother, steadier return over the long term.



Equities versus cash and bonds

Investments in stocks and shares are also known as equity investments, because they are connected to the market value, or equity, of companies.

It's well known that equity investments carry a higher risk than investments in things like cash or government bonds.

These types of investment fluctuate much less than equity investments and aren't affected by market volatility as much, but they also tend to grow more slowly.

Data show that over time equity investors are rewarded for the extra risk they take, with equity investments outperforming cash investments over the long term, even when inflation is taken into account.

Of course, many investors do keep some investments in cash as part of a strategy to maintain a diverse and balanced portfolio.

The value of investments can go down as well as up, so you may get back less than you invest.

The benefits of regular investing

One of the best ways to ride out a period of volatility is to invest regularly.

Making smaller investments at regular intervals can both remove some of the worry about when you should purchase shares and help you take advantage of changes in their price.

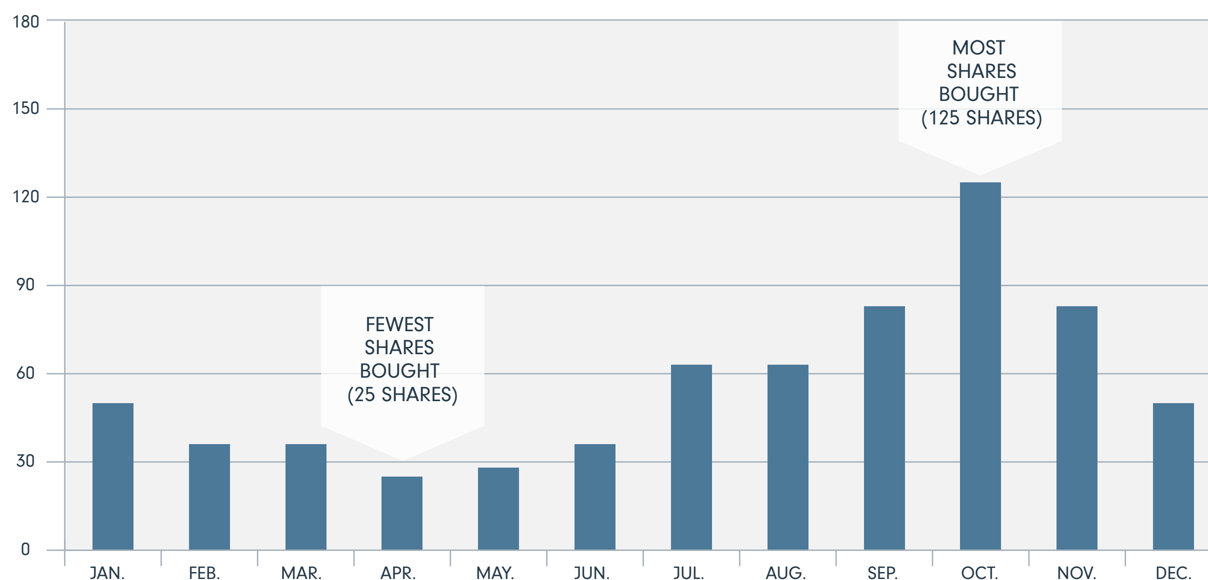
This process is known as dollar cost averaging. The principle behind it is that when share prices are high, you'll get less for your money, but you'll also have the flexibility to buy more for the same amount of money when prices are low.

Most investment funds or platforms will let you set up regular payments each month, or at some other regular intervals.

It can be tempting to take income as it's generated, but thanks to the power of compound interest, keeping income invested can lead to much more impressive total returns over time.

DOLLAR COST AVERAGING IN ACTION

Potential difference of investing $3,000 as a lump sum versus 12 monthly payments of $250



Source: Fidelity Investment Canada, based upon hypothetical market movements. There is no guarantee that dollar cost averaging will result in better returns than lump sum investing.

	DOLLAR COST AVERAGING	LUMP SUM INVESTMENT
Avg price per share	$4.43	$5.00
Shares accumulated	676.59	600
Value by end of year	$3,383	$3,000

Looking ahead

For investors, market volatility can be either a useful opportunity or an unwelcome distraction. But it should never be a reason to act rashly.

The most important thing about any investment journey is to remain focused on your long-term goals, and not be distracted by sudden events that might seem scary, but can be managed with a little bit of planning and a level head.

This information is not a personal recommendation for any particular investment. If you are unsure about the suitability of an investment, you should speak to an authorized financial advisor.

"Remember, an investment only has a real, tangible value when it's bought or sold. Until then, it's just a number."

For more information, contact your advisor or visit **fidelity.ca**

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