

THE 5 THINGS HURTING YOUR CREDIT

And how to fix each one.

A 15-minute self-check from Credit Xperts. Work through each item, tick the boxes, and you'll know exactly what's dragging your score — and your next step.

The 5 factors that decide your FICO score

Your score isn't one number someone hands you — it's built from five weighted factors. Knowing which one is hurting you is the difference between guessing and fixing.

1. Payment history — 35% of your score

The biggest lever. One late payment (30+ days) can drop your score 60–100+ points and stays on your report for 7 years. Lenders want to see: do you pay on time, every time?

Your checklist:

- ☐ Pull your 3-bureau report (free at annualcreditreport.com).
- ☐ List every account and its payment status.
- ☐ Flag any late marks — note the month and the creditor.
- ☐ If a late mark is inaccurate, dispute it with a factual letter citing the FCRA.
- ☐ If it's accurate, set autopay on every account today — even for the minimum.

2. Amounts owed (credit utilization) — 30%

How much of your available credit you're using. Under 10% is best; over 30% starts to hurt; over 50% hurts a lot. This is the fastest factor to change — you can move it in days.

Your checklist:

- ☐ For each card, divide balance by limit. Write the %.
- ☐ Any card over 30% is a priority — pay it down first.
- ☐ Pay BEFORE the statement closing date — that's what's reported, not the due date.
- ☐ Ask for a credit-limit increase (soft pull) to lower utilization.
- ☐ Don't close old cards — keeping them open helps this factor.

3. Length of credit history — 15%

Older accounts raise your average age and boost your score. Closing your oldest card shortens history and can lower your score.

Your checklist:

- ☐ Find your oldest credit card or loan on the report.
- ☐ Is it open? Keep it open — even a small charge yearly keeps it active.
- ☐ Don't open several new accounts at once — each lowers your average age.
- ☐ If you're new to credit, an authorized-user tradeline from family helps here.

4. New credit / inquiries — 10%

Each hard inquiry (a credit application) can drop your score a few points. A few is fine; many in a short window signals risk to lenders.

Your checklist:

- ☐ Count the hard inquiries on your report (last 12 months).
- ☐ If you see one you didn't authorize, dispute it — it may be fraud.
- ☐ Space out applications — avoid applying for several cards in the same month.
- ☐ Rate-shopping for a mortgage or auto loan counts as ONE inquiry if done within 14–45 days.

5. Credit mix — 10%

A blend of revolving credit (cards) and installment loans (auto, mortgage, personal) managed responsibly helps. You don't need one of each — but it's a small boost.

Your checklist:

- ☐ List your account types: revolving, installment, mortgage.
- ☐ If you only have cards, a small credit-builder loan adds a positive installment tradeline.
- ☐ Never open a loan just for 'mix' — only if it fits your finances.

Your next step

If you found issues on your report — late marks you didn't expect, accounts you don't recognize, or high utilization — you have two paths:

► **Path 1 — Free, do it yourself:** Dispute inaccurate items directly with the bureaus through annualcreditreport.com. It works if you have the time and know-how.

► **Path 2 — Let us help:** Book a free 30-minute consultation. We'll pull your 3-bureau report, show you exactly what's hurting, and tell you whether professional help would speed things up — no pressure, no obligation.

Ready for a real plan?

Book a free 30-minute consultation at
creditxperts.pplx.app

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