

Fastest Ways to Improve Your Personal Credit and FICO Score

1. Pay Down Credit Card Balances (Reduce Credit Utilization)

- Impact: High
- Keep usage below 30% of your total credit limit - ideally under 10%.
- Pay off revolving debt (credit cards) before due dates.

2. Make All Payments On Time

- Impact: Very High
- Payment history makes up 35% of your FICO score.
- Set up auto-pay or reminders to avoid missed payments.

3. Request Credit Limit Increases

- Impact: Medium to High
- Increases your available credit, which lowers your utilization rate.
- Best done if income has increased or you've shown positive credit behavior.

4. Become an Authorized User

- Impact: Medium
- Get added to a well-managed credit card account with a long history.
- You benefit from the accounts positive history.

5. Dispute Inaccurate Credit Report Items

- Impact: High (if errors exist)
- Check reports at AnnualCreditReport.com.
- Dispute inaccurate late payments, collections, or balances.

6. Pay Off Collection Accounts (Strategically)

- Impact: Medium to High
- Negotiate 'pay-for-delete' or ensure account shows 'paid' or 'settled'.
- FICO 9 and VantageScore 3.0+ ignore paid collections.

7. Add Positive Trade Lines (Credit Builder Tools)

- Impact: Medium
- Use credit builder loans, secured cards, or rent/utility reporting services.

8. Avoid New Hard Inquiries

- Impact: Small to Medium

- Avoid applying for too much new credit at once.
- Hard inquiries can temporarily lower your score.

FICO Factor Impact Table

- Payment History (35%) - Pay on time, remove late payments
- Credit Utilization (30%) - Pay down balances, increase limits
- Credit Age (15%) - Become authorized user on old account
- Credit Mix (10%) - Add a credit builder loan or secured card
- New Inquiries (10%) - Avoid unnecessary credit applications