

Chapter 1

Setting Up Shop

In This Chapter

- ▶ Installing and setting up Quicken
 - ▶ Setting up your bank (or other) accounts if you're a first-time user
 - ▶ Providing a Quicken overview
 - ▶ Solving setup problems
-

If you've never used Quicken, begin here. This chapter tells you how to install Quicken (if you haven't already) and how to start the program for the first time. You also find out how you go about setting up Quicken accounts to track banking activities — specifically, the money that goes into and out of a checking or savings account.

If you've already begun to use Quicken, don't waste any time reading this chapter unless you want the review. You already know the stuff it covers.

By the way, if you have Windows, I assume that you know a little bit about it. No, you don't have to be some sort of expert. Shoot, you don't even have to be all that proficient. You do need to know how to start Windows applications (such as Quicken). It also helps immensely if you know how to choose commands on menus and how to enter stuff in windows and dialog boxes. If you don't know how to do these kinds of things, flip to Appendix A. It provides a quick-and-dirty overview of how you work in Windows. Read the stuff in the appendix, or at least skim it, and then come back to this chapter.



When I say Windows, I mean a recent version of Windows — something Microsoft is either currently selling or has sold in the last few years. Quicken 2013 won't run on Windows versions earlier than Windows XP, so if you want to run the latest version, I'm afraid it's time to upgrade. By the way, for the computer I used to write this book, I used Windows 7.

Installing and Starting Quicken

You install Quicken the same way that you install any program in Windows. If you already know how to install programs, you don't need any help from me. Stop reading here, do the installation thing, start your newly installed Quicken program, and then start reading the next section, "Finishing Setup If You've Used Quicken Before."

If you need help installing Quicken, here are the step-by-step instructions. Installing Quicken from a CD is easy:

1. Insert the CD into the CD-ROM drive.

In a short amount of time, Quicken should display the Quicken 2013 install wizard window. I'm not going to show this window in a figure. There's really nothing in the window to talk about. The window just reads `Welcome to Quicken 2013!`.

Note: If nothing happens when you put the CD into the CD-ROM drive, don't panic! First, try removing the CD and then putting it in again. If Windows still doesn't recognize the CD, you need to *tell* Windows that it should install your Quicken program. In many versions of Windows (but not necessarily with your version), you do this with the Windows Control Panel by using the Programs tool. To do this, refer to your Windows user guide or a good book about your version of Windows (such as Andy Rathbone's *Windows 8 For Dummies*).

2. Click Next.

Quicken then displays a window that asks you a couple of questions:

- Whether you accept the Quicken license agreement.
- Whether you're okay if Quicken sends anonymous usage statistics to Intuit.

You can answer the install wizard's questions by selecting the check boxes in front of the questions.

3. Click Next.

Quicken displays the next window of the install wizard, which asks where you want to install Quicken. You should accept the installation's program suggestion. (The installation program suggests a Quicken subfolder in your Program Files folder.)

4. Click Next.

Quicken displays yet another window of the install wizard that indicates the wizard needs to install the Quicken software and may need to

update the software, too. Assuming you're okay with all this — and you should be — click the Install button.

Quicken installs itself. This process takes a few minutes. Along the way, you may see other screenfuls of messages, including marketing information about the features new to Quicken and some progress reports on the installation itself.

After the installation is complete, Quicken displays an installation complete message.

5. Click Done.

Congratulations. You're nearly done.

6. Register.

After installing the Quicken software, the installation program starts the Quicken program to finish the setup process. The first task you need to complete when you start Quicken is registering the software. I hate it that software companies do this. But what choice do I have? Accordingly, when Quicken displays the dialog box that asks whether you want to register, click the Register button, fill out the form that appears, and click the Register button yet again, and then click the Finish button.

Finishing Setup If You've Used Quicken Before

If you've used a previous version of Quicken, the Quicken program might show option buttons to indicate what you want to do next: Open the found data file. (Alternatively, you can indicate that you want to open some other data file.) You're done. You're ready to begin Quicken-ing.



The Quicken setup process can usually tell whether you've used Quicken before. The setup process knows where the Quicken installation program usually puts the Quicken program and data files, and the installation program will look there. If you've used Quicken before but Quicken can't see this, two possibilities exist: The first possibility is that you put the Quicken data file someplace weird. (If that's the case, hopefully, you remember the weird place you hid the Quicken data file. But if not, see the section, "The mysterious case of the missing Quicken data files," at the end of this chapter.) The second possibility is that you didn't do anything with the Quicken data file but that the data file has somehow gone missing. (If that's the case, I hope you backed up the Quicken data file to a CD or to some other disc from which you can restore the data file.)

Finishing Setup If You've Not Used Quicken Before

To finish up the setup when you've not used Quicken before, the program displays a friendly welcome message (not shown), which asks you to indicate whether you're a new Quicken user (or someone who wants to start over from scratch as if you're a new user) or you're already a Quicken user and need to open a file from a previous version of Quicken.

You indicate your Quicken status by selecting the appropriate option button and then clicking the big, blue Get Started button. What happens next depends on which button you click.

Already a Quicken user?

If you've used Quicken before and select the I Am Already A Quicken User option, Quicken then displays another Get Started With Quicken 2013 window, which asks whether you want to open a Quicken file located on this computer, restore a Quicken data file you've backed up to CD or disc, or start over and create a new data file.

If you indicate that you want to open another Quicken data file located on the computer, Quicken displays a dialog box that asks where that file is. If you indicate that you want to grab a backup copy of the Quicken file, Quicken displays a dialog box that asks where that file is. Presumably, if either of these situations is your case, you'll know where the data file or backup copy of the data file is.

Are you new to Quicken?

If you indicate that you're a new Quicken user, Quicken automatically sets up a data file for you (you don't need to worry about it). Next, Quicken prompts you to register. (You might as well do this. The registration takes only a few minutes. All you do, in a nutshell, is provide your name and address, a bit of information about how you use Quicken, and your e-mail address.)

After the data file is set up, Quicken starts the home page. (See Figure 1-1.) The Setup Center walks you through the steps for setting up Quicken. (You can find out much more on this process in the next section.)



Figure 1-1:
The Quicken
home page.

Describing Your Banking

If you haven't used Quicken before or are starting from scratch, the first time you start Quicken 2013, the program shows a home page that includes a big Get Started button in (roughly) the middle of the screen.

Clicking the Get Started button allows you to provide information about your primary checking account and its current balance. Figure 1-2 shows the window that collects the first part of this information, but just so you don't get confused, here are the precise steps you take:

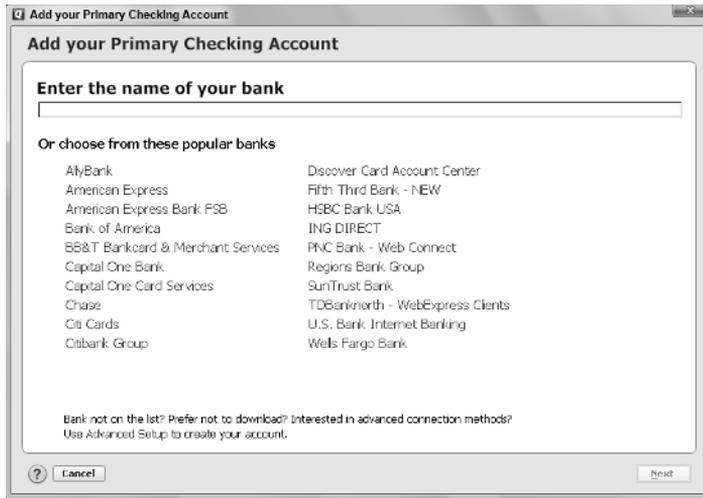


Figure 1-2:
The first
Add Your
Primary
Checking
Account
window.

1. Identify the financial institution — usually a bank — by typing your institution’s name in the text box provided.

As you type, Quicken displays a list of financial institutions that match what you’ve typed so far. The more you type, the shorter the list of possible matching institutions.

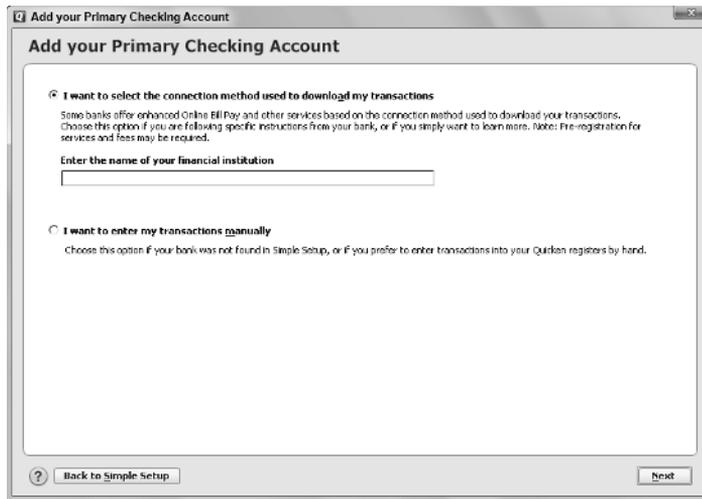
2. Tell Quicken whether you want to download transactions directly from your bank or enter transactions manually.

If your bank provides Internet access to your bank account — and many banks do — Quicken knows. And as a result, Quicken attempts to not-so-subtly push you into just grabbing data from the bank’s website. I’m going to suggest, however, that you maintain your account manually. You have plenty of time later to find out how online banking works. (Online banking is really cool, though. See Chapter 6 for more information.)

That said, however, if you see your bank listed and you want to use online banking, select the bank and click Next. When you click the Next button, Quicken displays another version of the Add Your Primary Checking Account window, which asks for the username and password required to access your bank account electronically. To download transactions and account balance information directly from your bank’s website, you will need to provide this information. After you provide this information, click the Connect button to test the username and password information.

If you don't want to use online banking quite yet and are happy to start slow and go manually at the beginning, click the Advanced Setup hyperlink at the bottom of the first Add Your Primary Checking Account window. Quicken won't quite believe you're bold enough to ignore its strong advice to go digital and so will display another Add Your Primary Checking Account window that provides option buttons you can use to indicate you want to be clever and just download transactions or that you want to be ploddingly cautious and at least at the start enter transactions manually. By default, the I Want to Select the Connection Method option is selected. (See Figure 1-3.) But you don't want to be clever — or least not quite yet — so select the I Want To Enter My Transactions Manually option.

Figure 1-3:
The second
Add Your
Primary
Checking
Account
window
attempts to
force you
to do online
banking.



Note: Quicken may not get into this online banking stuff if Quicken can tell that your bank doesn't support online banking.

3. Tell Quicken the name you want to use for the checking account.

You do so by typing a name in the Account Name/Nickname text box, shown in Figure 1-4. Furthermore, if given the choice, click one of the option buttons that may appear below the Account Name/Nickname text box to indicate whether you're using the bank account primarily for business finances, personal finances, and so on. By the way, as far as the account name goes, you can be as general or as specific as you want. But brevity is a virtue here, so be concise: Quicken uses your account name to label stuff within the Quicken window and on Quicken reports. If you use a long account name, the name may not always fit on reports and screens.

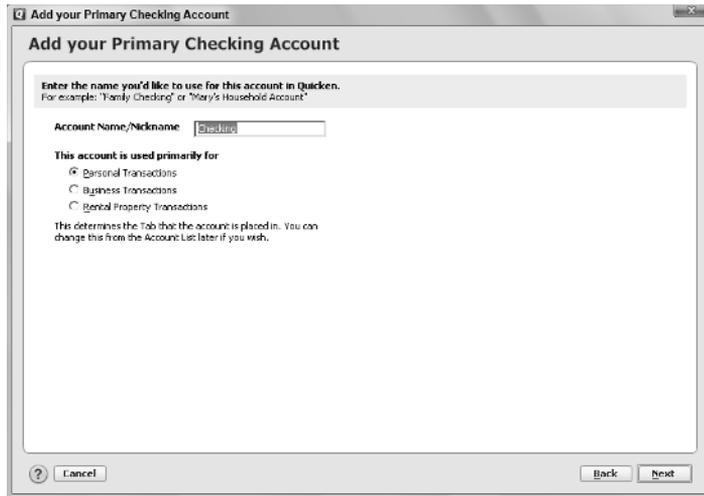


Figure 1-4:
The third
Add Your
Primary
Checking
Account
window.

4. Enter the ending bank statement date by referring to your bank statement.

After you provide Quicken with a name and general description of the account's transactions, click Next, and Quicken displays another account setup dialog box (shown in Figure 1-5) that asks about the account's ending statement date and ending statement balance. Enter the date of your last bank statement into the Statement Ending Date text box. This date, by the way, is forward from which you will start using Quicken. Enter the date in *MM/DD/YYYY* or *MM/DD/YY* fashion.

"Geez, Steve," you're now saying to yourself, "what's *MM/DD/YYYY* fashion?" Okay. Here's an example: If your bank statement is dated August 30, 2013, type **8/30/2013**, or you can type **083013**.

5. Enter the ending bank statement balance by referring to your latest bank statement.

This balance is whatever appears on your bank statement. This balance is also the amount of money in your account on the date you begin your financial record keeping. If you have \$4.16 in your checking account, type **4.16** in the Statement Ending Balance text box.

6. After you type the bank statement balance, click the Next button to continue moving through the account setup.

Ultimately, you'll see a window that provides buttons you can click to start using Quicken and to add more bank accounts and even credit card accounts.

If you have several other bank accounts that you want to set up within Quicken, repeat the preceding steps for each account. Just click the button that refers to adding another bank account.

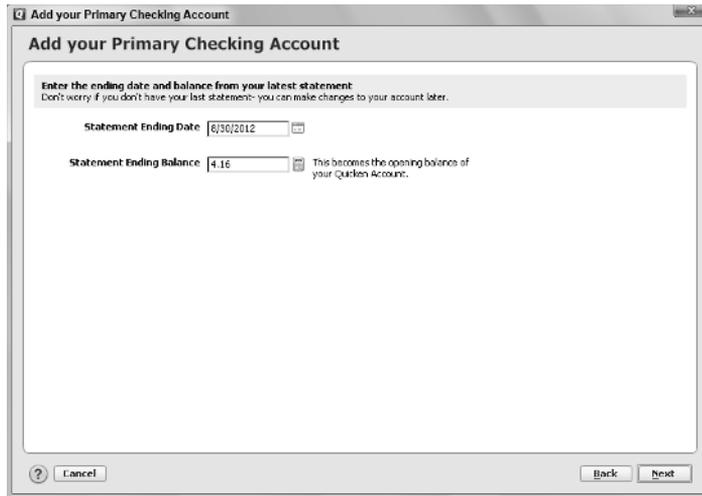


Figure 1-5:
The fourth
Adding Your
Primary
Checking
Account
window.

Slogging Through More Setup Stuff

Okay, from my perspective, after you've described your bank account(s), you're ready to start using Quicken. With Quicken, the key thing you want to do is track your bank account or accounts so you can monitor and measure your income and your outgo — and so that you know how much money you have in an account.

The folks at Intuit, however, allow you to provide the Quicken program with a lot more information about your financial affairs. Specifically, the Intuit gang let you describe in detail your income sources and your regular expenditures.

To tell Quicken all about your income and outgo, click the Get Started button in the Stay On Top Of Monthly Bills area of the home page. When you do, Quicken displays the first Stay On Top Of Monthly Bills window, shown in Figure 1-6. To describe a recurring bill (like your rent check, car loan payment, and so on), you click the Add A Bill button. Then, when Quicken displays the Add Bill Reminder dialog box (not shown), you describe the bill in detail, including who gets paid, when they should be paid, why they're paid, and so forth. (I'm not going to describe the Add Bill Reminder dialog box here because I talk about it in detail in Chapter 12 when the subject of loan payments comes up.)

The best way to get started

Quicken wants you to use your last bank statement to set up the bank account you track. This way, your financial records synchronize with the bank's records when you start using Quicken.

But I want to suggest something slightly different to you. Go back farther than just to the beginning of the preceding month (which is what you do when you use your last bank statement). Go back to the beginning of the year and use the last bank statement of the preceding year — even if it's now several months after the beginning of the year. Now, I'm not trying to waste your time. Let me point out two big

advantages to having a complete year's data in Quicken: Tracking and tallying your tax deductions will be a snap, and planning your finances will be easier. When you enter the activity, be sure to enter any outstanding checks or deposits from the prior period with their correct dates also. That way, they are there to check off when you do your first reconciliation.

Going back to the beginning of the year isn't as hard as you may think. Quicken provides a bunch of tools to help you enter several months' worth of data in a very short time, as you can see in this chapter and in the two or three that follow.

If you click the Next button in the bottom-right corner of the Stay On Top Of Monthly Bills window, Quicken displays a second version of the Stay On Top Of Monthly Bills window, shown in Figure 1-7. The second version of the Stay On Top Of Monthly Bills window provides an Add Income Reminder button.

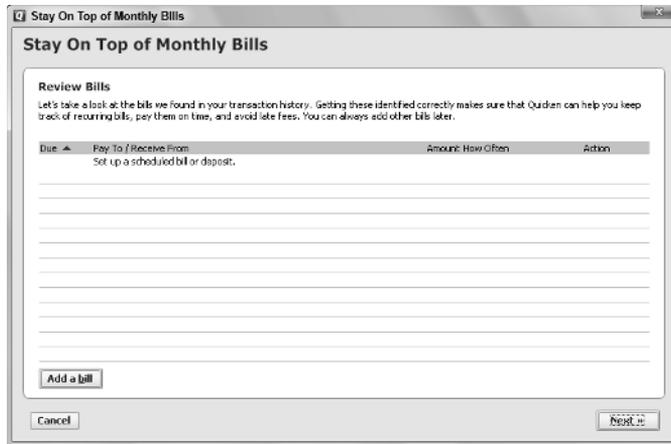


Figure 1-6:
The first
version of
the Stay
On Top Of
Monthly
Bills
window.

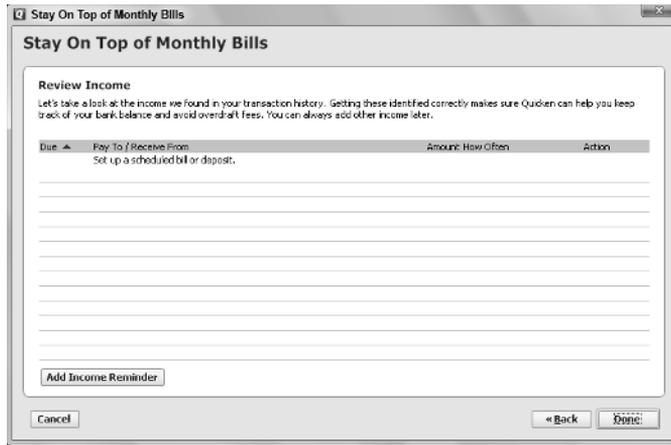


Figure 1-7:
The second
version of
the Stay
On Top of
Monthly
Bills
window.

To provide information about your income to Quicken, click the Add Income Reminder button. Quicken displays dialog boxes that ask for the gory details.

Steve's Overview

You don't need to know much about the mechanics of the Quicken *interface* — the way its window looks and works — to begin working with Quicken, especially in any chapters in this book in which I cover the basics. I provide plenty of detailed instructions, but I have a couple of quick comments now.

Using Quicken QCards

Quicken displays business-card-sized pop-up boxes in your Quicken program window, called Quicken QCards. You can remove these QCards from your program window (as I did for shooting the screen shots in this book). But you'll want to use the QCards for at least a little while if you're a new user. The QCards provide all sorts of good information and advice about getting going with Quicken. And you can page through whole scads of tidbits and tips by clicking the QCard Previous and Next buttons. Finally, when you ultimately tire of the QCards, no problem — just click the QCard close button (the X in the upper-right corner of the box).

Starting Quicken for the second time

The second time you start Quicken — and every subsequent time — things work pretty much the same way as the first time. Double-click the Quicken icon on your desktop. Or, if you like doing things the hard way, click Start and then choose Quicken 2013.

Using the Accounts bar

Along the left edge of the program window, just beneath the boldface word Accounts, Quicken lists the accounts you've set up. In other words, if you set up a single checking account, the Accounts bar shows just that single checking account. If you set up 13 bank accounts because that's just the sort of person you are, the Accounts bar shows the 13 checking and savings accounts.

You can display the transactions you've entered for an account shown in the Accounts bar by clicking the account name. (I talk more about this in Chapter 4.)

You can collapse the Accounts bar by clicking the minus (-) symbol that appears in front of the word Accounts. If you've previously collapsed the Accounts bar, you can expand the bar by clicking the plus (+) symbol that appears in front of the word Accounts.

Navigating with tabs

Quicken arranges all its features — whistles, bells, or whatever else you want to call them — using navigation tabs that appear near the top edge of the window. For example, if you look closely at Figure 1-1 (shown earlier), you can see tabs labeled Home, Spending, Bills, Planning, and Rental Property.

If you're still confused, click the buttons and bits of text in the area of the Quicken window that I'm talking about. You'll clearly see how things work.



If you click the Home or Bills tab and you haven't yet set up enough of Quicken to use the features provided by the tab, you encounter a blue Get Started button. If you click the Get Started button, Quicken steps you through setting up the tabs features.

Solving Tricky Setup Problems

I want to quickly go over a handful of annoying setup problems new Quicken users may encounter. If you have Quicken set up and are ready to roll, skip this stuff.

Did somebody say Macintosh?

You can use the existing old Quicken files if you're working with a new version of Quicken. In fact, if the Quicken installation program can find a version of old Quicken files on your computer, it gives you the option of just skipping all the Quicken setup stuff. In this case, you just begin using your existing files. (I mention this point earlier in this chapter, in fact.)

If you've been using Quicken for Macintosh, however, you have to export your data from the Macintosh before you can read it in the Windows version. And I can think of about a million things more fun to do than exporting Quicken data from a Mac to Windows. See the section in Chapter 17 on importing data from an old accounting system for a brief discussion on the procedure and some suggestions for better ways to spend your time.

The mysterious case of the missing Quicken data files

If Quicken doesn't find the old files, you need to open the specific files. But if you have this problem, you should be able to solve it yourself. What has happened, if you find yourself in this boat, is that you've moved or messed around with the Quicken files with some other program, such as Windows. If you did that, presumably you had a reason. And more to the point, you should know where you put the files.

Migrating from Microsoft Money

Suppose that you're moving from Microsoft Money to Quicken. The question of the hour is this: Can you reuse your old or existing Money files in Quicken? The answer is, "Yes, sort of."

First of all, the Quicken File menu includes an Import command that lets you import files from Microsoft Money 2007 or 2008. So far, so good.

Further, if you've got an older version of Microsoft Money you want to convert data from, you can follow instructions provided at the <http://quicken.intuit.com> website for migrating the data. To get to the actual page of instructions for how you do this, use Bing or Google and enter *Intuit.com Importing Your Microsoft Money File into Quicken* as your search term. The instructions, just so you know, require you to download a free trial version of the Microsoft Money 2008 software so you can upgrade your really old Microsoft Money data file to the nearly as old Money 2008 data file format and then direct you to import that data file into Quicken. The bottom line? Theoretically, you can move old Microsoft Money data files to Quicken.

Practically, however, moving financial information from Quicken to Money or vice versa doesn't seem to work all that well. Transactions seem to get lost. Account balances get messed up. People ruin their lives. Well, maybe that last comment is a slight exaggeration. But, no kidding: Migrating is problematic. If you do want to move from one program to another, I suggest making sure that you have a really good reason for doing so and that you allow yourself enough time to track down and correct any errors.