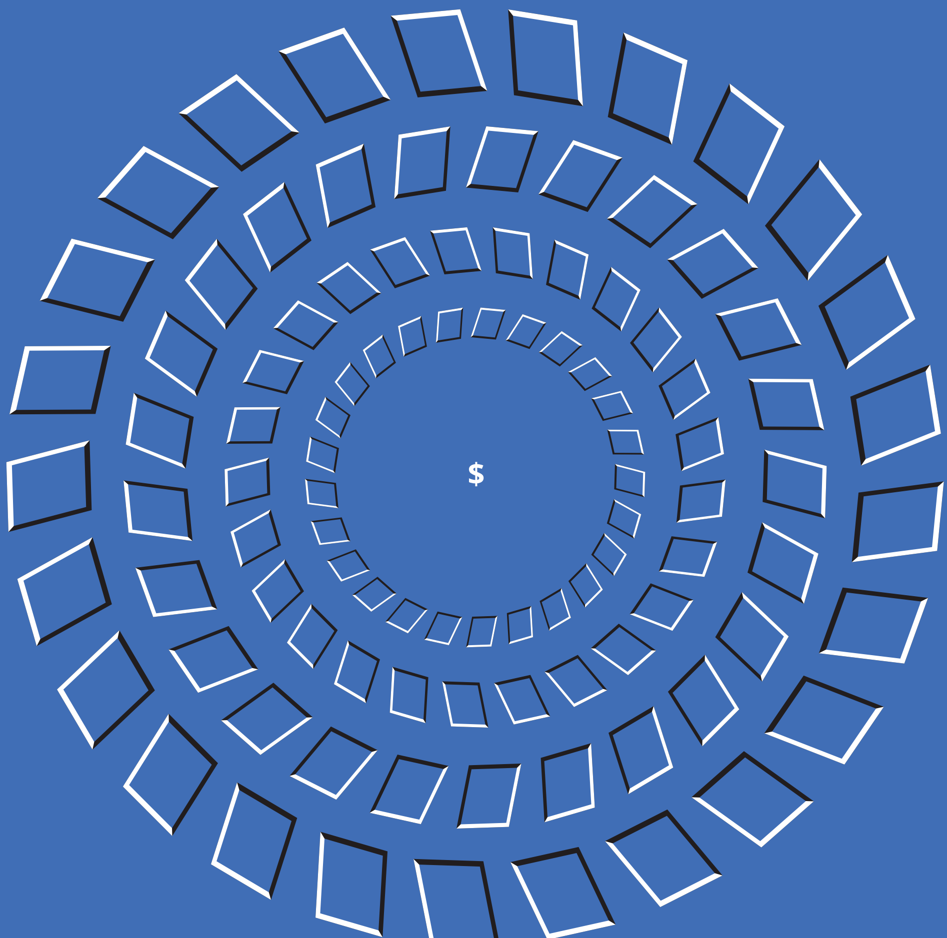
HARTFORDFUNDS

Our benchmark is the investor.®

Beyond Investment Illusions



Focus on the dollar sign in the center and move your head forward and back.

NOT FDIC INSURED • MAY LOSE VALUE • NO BANK GUARANTEE

When it comes to investment decisions, don’t give into your natural reactions

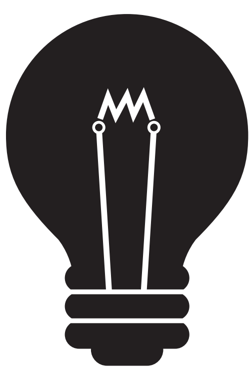
The art of the illusion takes advantage of our natural reactions. Specifically, illusions work against them. An illusion can make still objects appear to rotate or even make us see things that don’t exist. Illusions create a false sense of the possible.

Illusions Have Real Influence

While investing is considerably more complicated than most illusions, the market can also take advantage of our natural reactions. In fact, the most important principles of investing are almost all counterintuitive by comparison. Many times the natural reaction to a market situation can be counterproductive at best or a serious setback to your financial goals at worst.

Seeing Clearly

With *Beyond Investment Illusions*, Hartford Funds wants to help you become a better-informed, more sophisticated investor by learning from the mistakes that other investors have made by following their natural reactions. We want to help you find ways to be less focused on short-term movements of the market and more consistent in your long-term investment strategy.



The after-effects of your investment decisions:

Stare at the picture unwaveringly for 30 seconds, then look at a white surface, such as a wall or blank piece of paper. Do you see the after-effect of a white light bulb?

Investment decisions you make today may have long-lasting consequences on your future investment performance.

Illusion

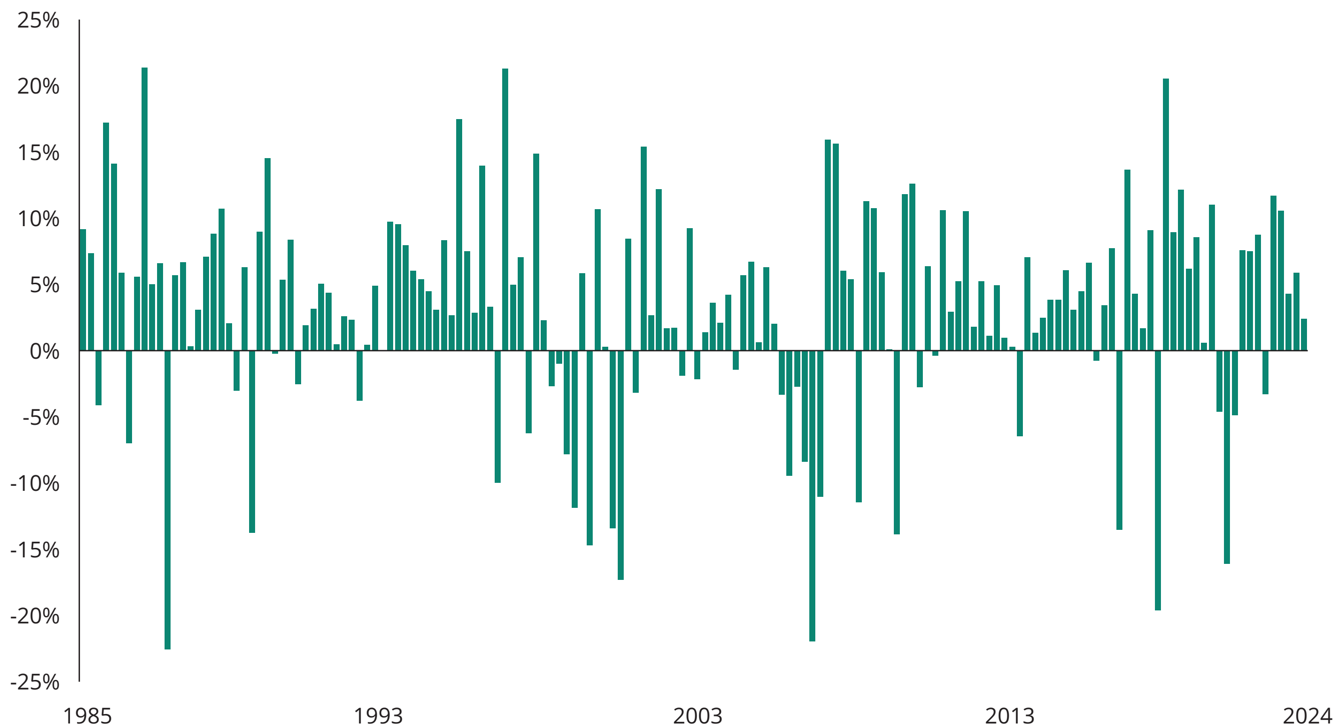
Volatility Must Be Feared

To most investors, even those who invest in equities (stocks), volatility is something to be avoided. And the market can certainly be volatile from year to year, as the chart below demonstrates. The typical reaction to volatile markets is to get out of equities altogether.

The Desire for Consistency

Most investors desire more consistency than the chart demonstrates. Given that the S&P 500 Index[1] had an average annual return of 11.78% from 1985 through year-end 2024, many investors may expect a similar return in an individual year. However, the Index returned between 9% and 12% annually only three times during that time period. Usually, it was above or below the average annual return of 11.78%, sometimes significantly.

Short-Term Volatility: S&P 500 Index Quarterly Returns % (1985–2024)



Would you feel comfortable investing in something that had investment returns this inconsistent?

[1] The S&P 500 Index is a composite of 500 leading companies in the United States.

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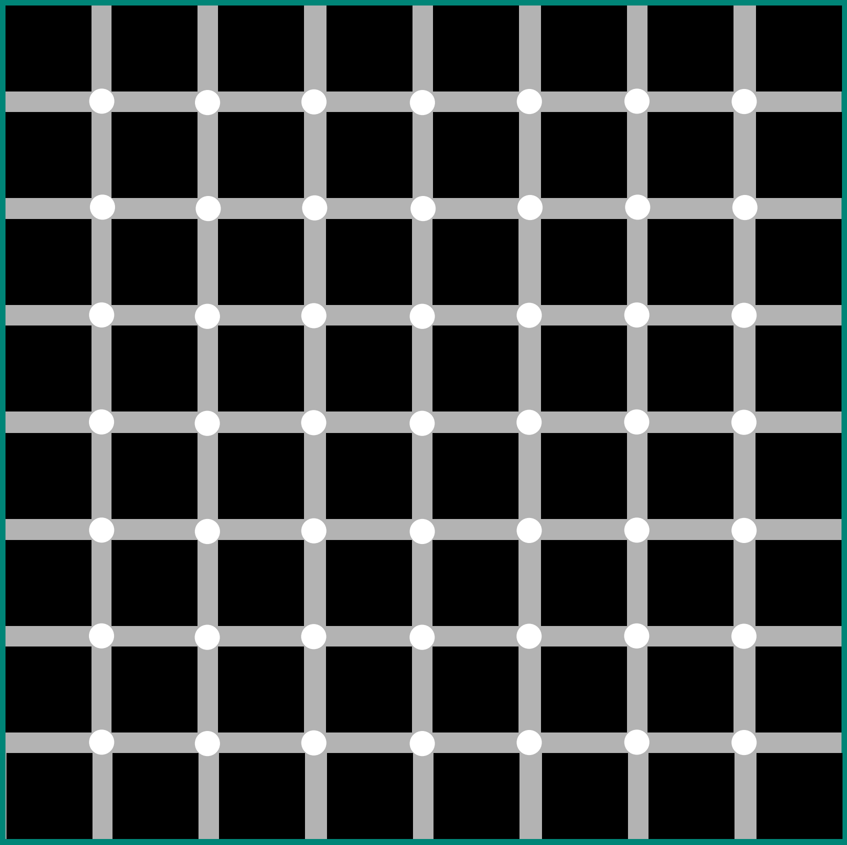
Data Sources: Morningstar and Hartford Funds, 2/25.



Looking for What's Not Really There?

As you look at the white dots, do you see gray dots also? Many investors see short-term volatility having a great effect on their investments, when the opposite is historically the case. Like the gray dots, the perception of short-term volatility is greater than its real impact.

Even an experienced investor can have difficulty staying focused on the long term in the face of a market downturn.

Reality

Volatility Should Be Expected

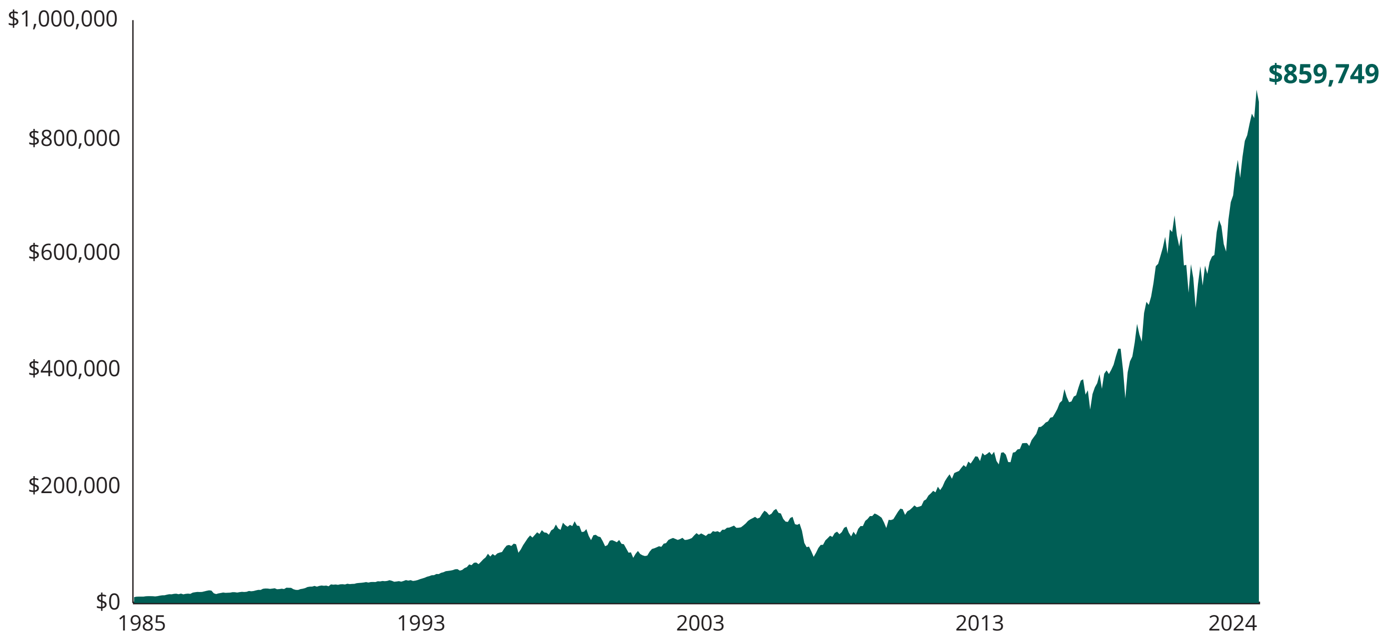
The chief illusion in the instinctive aversion to volatility is that many investors forget that volatility represents the potential for gain as much as it represents the potential for loss. Even more important, some investors fail to remember that short-term volatility, whether it be over a day, a week, or a year, is still short term.

A Long-Term Look at Volatility

Looking at short-term volatility from a long-term perspective can change its significance completely. The chart below shows the results of that volatility with a $10,000 investment into the same index as the bar chart on page 3, **over the same time period**. Instead of focusing on the shifts, an investor can see the overall effect of the 11.78% average annual return.

Creating a portfolio that is properly diversified across several different asset classes and investment styles can also help reduce volatility while still helping you meet your long-term financial goals.

Long-Term Growth: Hypothetical Growth of $10,000 Invested in S&P 500 Index (1985-2024)



While many investors would like an investment with the consistency shown in the chart above, they may not realize that this is the same investment shown on page 3, viewed from a long-term perspective. Instead of seeing the significant volatility shown by quarterly returns, the volatility now appears comparatively tranquil when viewed over a longer time period—an insight that may be forgotten amidst short-term swings in the market.

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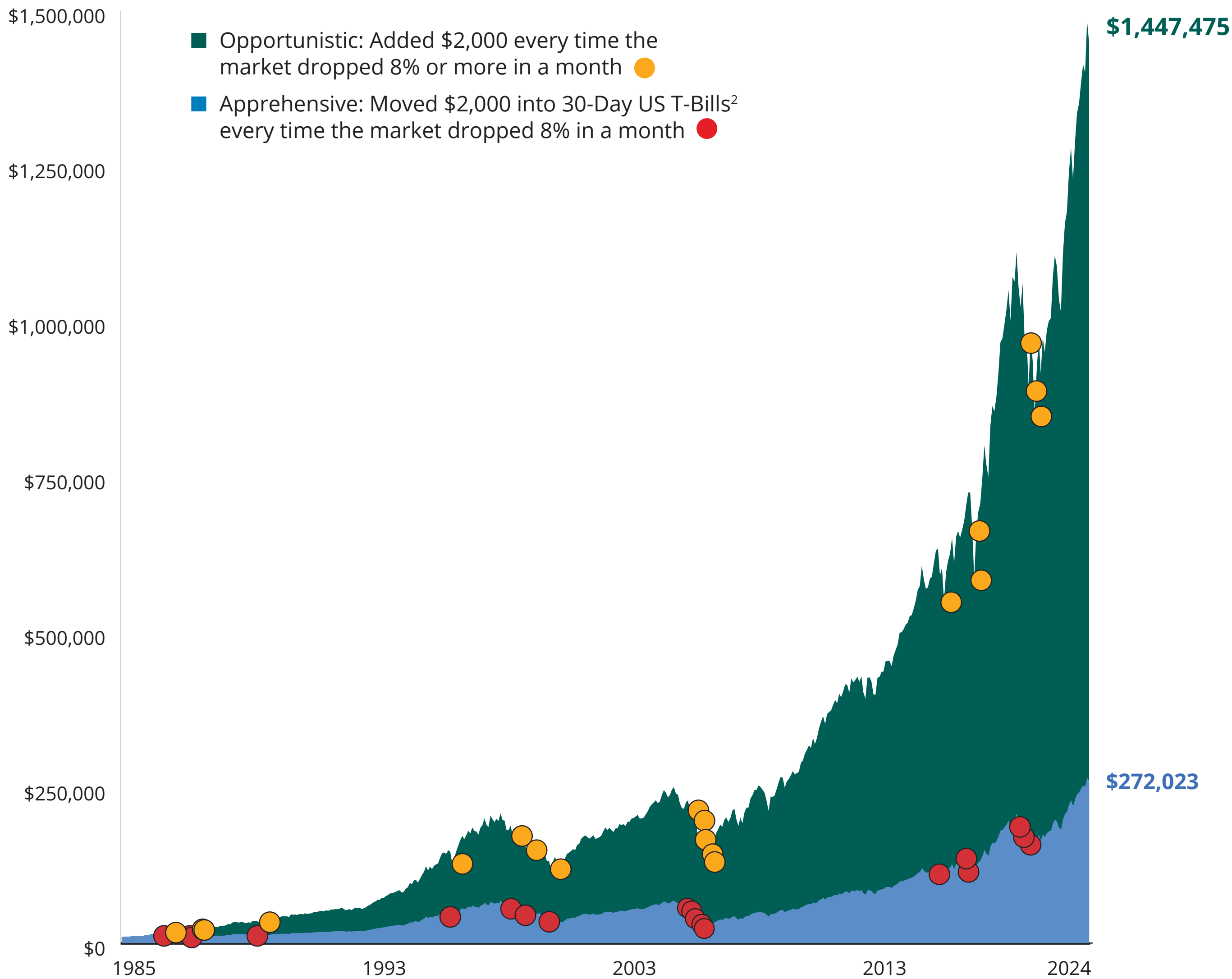
Data Sources: Morningstar and Hartford Funds, 2/25.

Two Hypothetical Approaches to Volatility: Growth of $10,000 Invested in S&P 500 Index (1985–2024)



What was the effect of two different historical approaches to volatility? Each assumes $10,000 invested on 12/31/84 into the S&P 500 Index; however, the opportunistic investor made additions when the market dropped, and the apprehensive investor shifted assets in the face of volatility. Ultimately, the opportunistic investor had a significantly higher investment value at the end. Investors should consider their financial ability to regularly make sizable investments during a prolonged market downturn. Assumes no taxes or transaction costs.

Data Sources: Morningstar and Hartford Funds, 2/25.

[2] T-Bills are guaranteed as to the timely payment of principal and interest by the U.S. Government and generally have lower risk-and-return than bonds and equities. Equity investments are subject to market volatility and have greater risk than bonds, T-Bills, and other cash investments. Fixed-income investments (bonds) are subject to interest-rate risk (the risk that the value of an investment decreases when interest rates rise) and credit risk (the risk that the issuing company of a security is unable to pay interest and principal when due) and call risk (the risk that an investment may be redeemed early).

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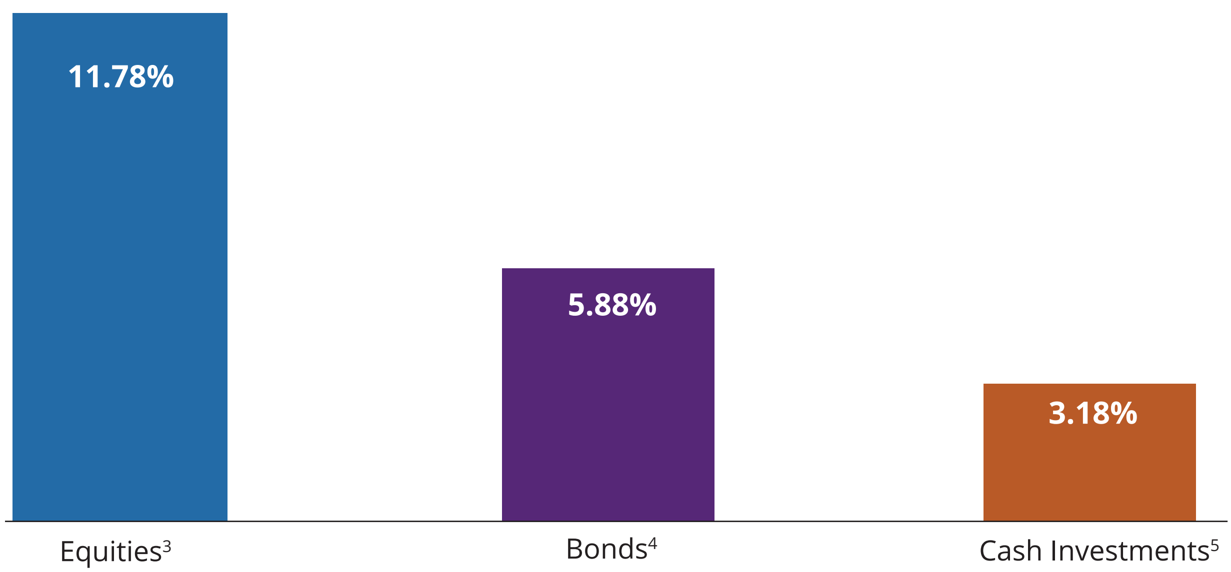
Illusion

Fixed-Income Investments Are Risk-Free

The tendency to see volatility as the only risk creates additional problems. Since the natural instinct is to avoid known risk, many investors seek to reduce their risk of volatility by avoiding equities altogether in favor of bonds and cash investments, such as Treasury Bills, CDs, and money market funds.

Also, many investors may have a natural tendency to think "all or none" in their approach to different types of assets, particularly when considering their equity investments.

Average Annual Returns (1985–2024)



Each of the asset classes have different risk-return profiles, as well as other characteristics, such as high liquidity (cash investments), regular fixed payments (bonds), and company ownership (equities). Your financial professional can help you understand the differences and appropriateness of each type.

[3] Equities are represented by the S&P 500 Index.

[4] Bonds are represented by the Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index, which includes U.S. Government, corporate, and mortgage-backed securities with maturities up to 30 years. Bonds, if held to maturity, provide a fixed rate of return and a fixed principal value. Bond funds will fluctuate, and when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost.

[5] Cash investments are represented by the Ibbotson SBBI U.S. 30-Day Treasury Bill Index, an unweighted index which measures the performance of one-month maturity U.S. Treasury Bills.

Treasuries are issued and backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government.

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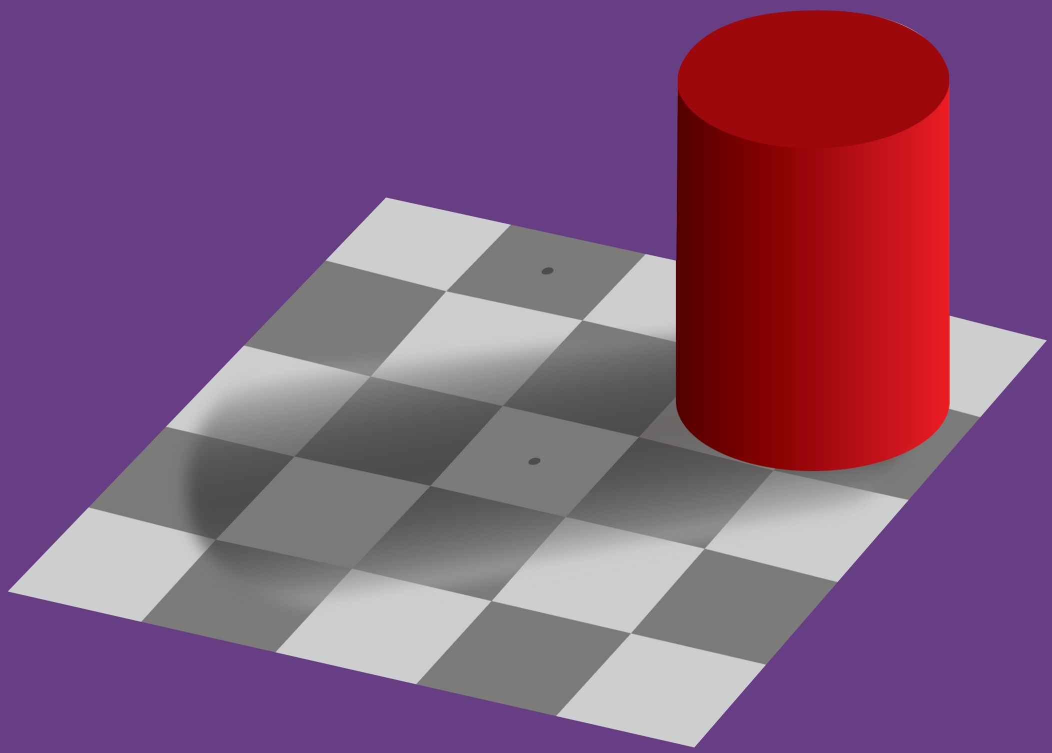
Data Sources: Morningstar and Hartford Funds, 2/25.



Sometimes Things Aren't What They Appear to Be

Few investors deliberately ignore obvious, known risks. By human nature, they focus on what they can see.

Unfortunately, seeing inflation and other abstract risks requires a broader perspective that examines both the visible and hidden factors of an investment plan. For example, one that helps you see that both squares marked with a dot are the same shade of gray.

Reality

Every Investment Carries Its Own Risk

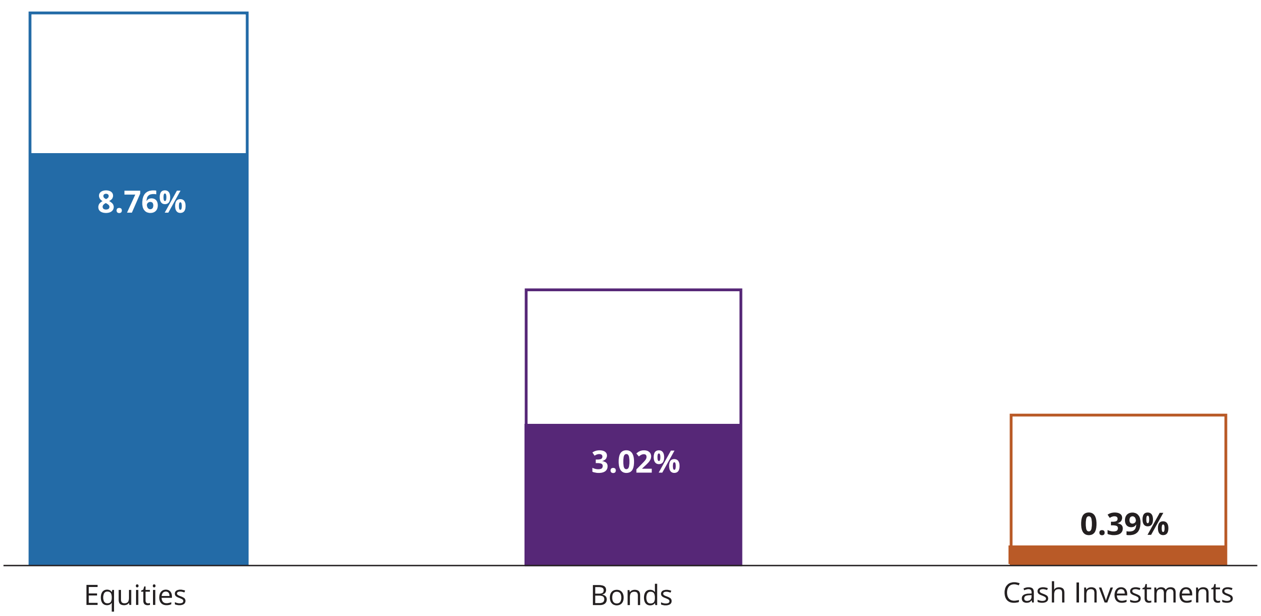
There are other risks besides volatility, and these risks act as a headwind to achieving your financial goals.

1. Inflation Risk
Inflation reduces the buying power of assets every year. Can the investment's return outpace inflation?

The damaging effects of inflation increase over time, as the erosion of each year's returns is compounded. For example, the chart below demonstrates the long-term effect inflation had on returns, reducing the return on cash investments from a seemingly generous 3.18% (as shown on page 7) to a stingy 0.39%.

Inflation-Adjusted Average Annual Returns[6]

(1985–2024) Average annual inflation (CPI) rate was 2.78%[6]



What happens to these returns after they are adjusted for inflation? A grim reality check for investors' financial goals.

[6] Taxes are not taken into account. Had taxes been included, the performance figures would have been lower. Consumer Price Index (CPI) is an index representing the rate of inflation of U.S. consumer prices as determined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics based on the cost of a variety of goods and services.

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Data Sources: Morningstar and Hartford Funds, 2/25.

2. Tax Risk
Taxes reduce returns every year. Can the investment's return outpace taxes?

3. Longevity Risk
Ultimately, the greatest risk is actually produced by taxes and inflation together—the risk of not having enough money to last through retirement. Can the investment not only meet your financial goals before retirement, but also last the length of your lifetime?

A well-planned, diversified portfolio can be appropriate for both your goals and risk tolerance, while helping address concerns about inflation, taxes, and longevity.

Double Time

Based on the inflation-adjusted rates on the previous page, how many years will it take to reach your investment goals? How long will it take for $100,000 to become $200,000?

Cash Investments	**177 Years**
Bonds	**23 Years**
Equities	**8 Years**

This hypothetical illustration is based on a mathematical formula and is not intended to predict or project the performance of any investment.

Data Sources: Morningstar and Hartford Funds, 2/25.

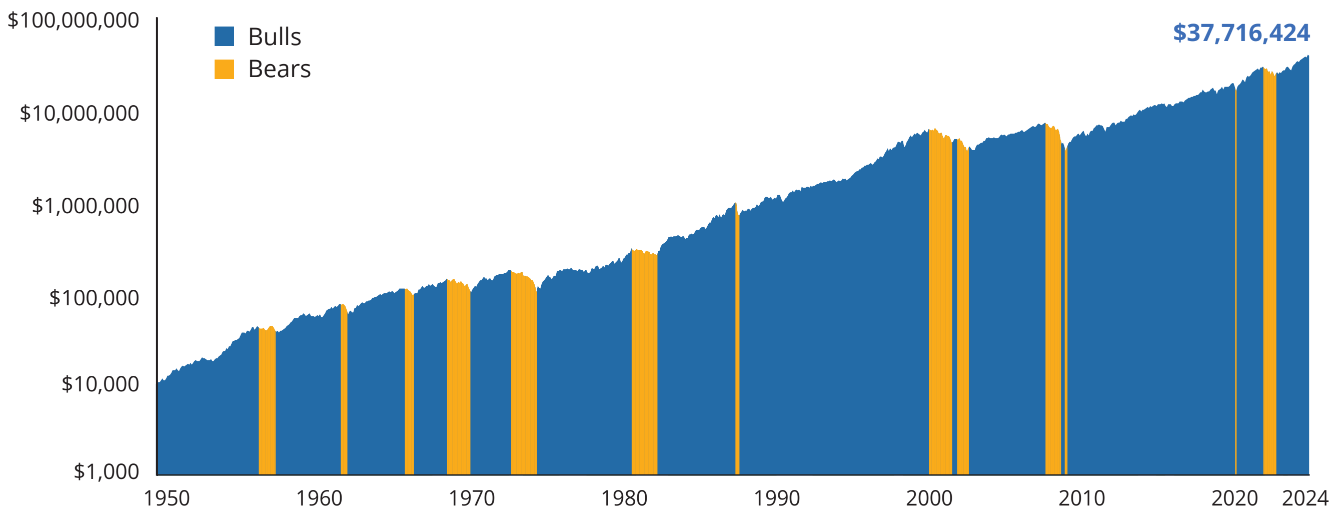
Illusion

Bulls And Bears Are Predictable

A history of the market shows very neatly separated bulls and bears. And the bears seem to pale in comparison to the bulls. Why not try to hit only the bulls and avoid the bears? Many investors believe that there must be some sign that indicates when to buy and when to bail.

But the fact is, even professional investors can't predict the future, and attempting to time the markets often ends in missed opportunities—or even losses. So the question becomes: "How quickly can investors identify a bull?"

Market Cycles—Hypothetical Growth of $10,000 Invested in S&P 500 Index (1950–2024)



Since 1950, there have been 14 bull markets and 13 bear markets. The comparatively small size of the bear markets in the chart above can be deceptive. Keep in mind that a bull must work twice as hard to make up for the previous bear. For example, if a bull market returns 100%, a bear market only needs to decline by 50% for the investment to be back to its pre-bull value.

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Data Sources: Morningstar and Hartford Funds, 2/25.

Reality

Timing The Market Is Impossible

The ability to predict the timing of bulls and bears is much harder than it looks.

If timing the market were possible, every investor would be easily and outrageously rich. Scholars have estimated that from 1926 to 1993 any investor had a 0.0000000000 0000000000000000000000000000000000000000 0000000000000000000000000000000000000000 0000000000000000000000000000000000000000 0000000000000000000000000000000000000000 0000000000000000000000000000000000000002 2883557% chance of timing the market correctly all of the time.[7]

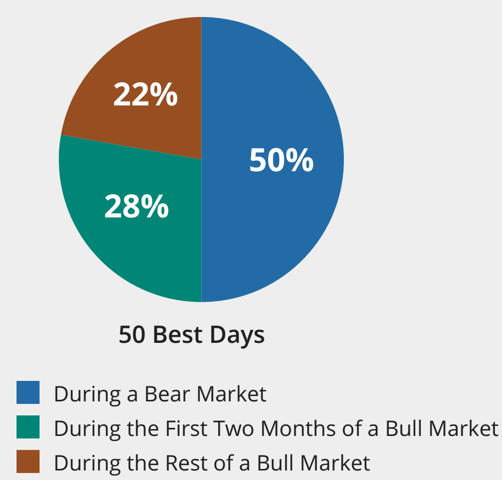
These odds don't stop many investors from shifting their investments into cash investments in attempts to avoid market downturns. Consequently, they often miss the market's best returns. Rather than trying to "time the market," investors should focus on time in the market, allowing investment returns to compound year after year.

Bull in Bear's Clothing

Historically, market timers seeking to avoid the downturn of a bear market would have missed the vast majority of the market's best days. Most of the best days occurred during a bear market or within the first two months of a bull market, when it's impossible to tell whether a bull has truly arrived. From 1994 to 2023, half of the market's best days occurred during a bear market.

Data Sources: Ned Davis Research and Hartford Funds, 2/25.

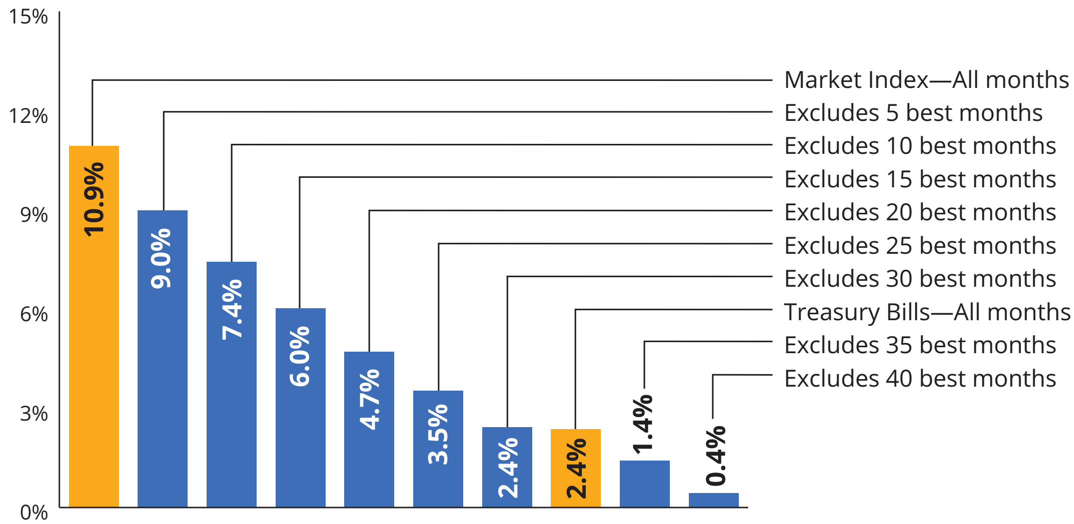
S&P 500 Index
Best Days: 1995–2024



[7] Data Sources: "Stock Market Extremes and Portfolio Performance," Nejat Seyhun, 1994. "A Nonparametric Test of Market Timing, "Wei Jang, 8/01. "Sequential Optimal Portfolio Performance: Market and Volatility Timing," Michael Johannes, Nicholas Polson, Jon Stroud, 2/02.

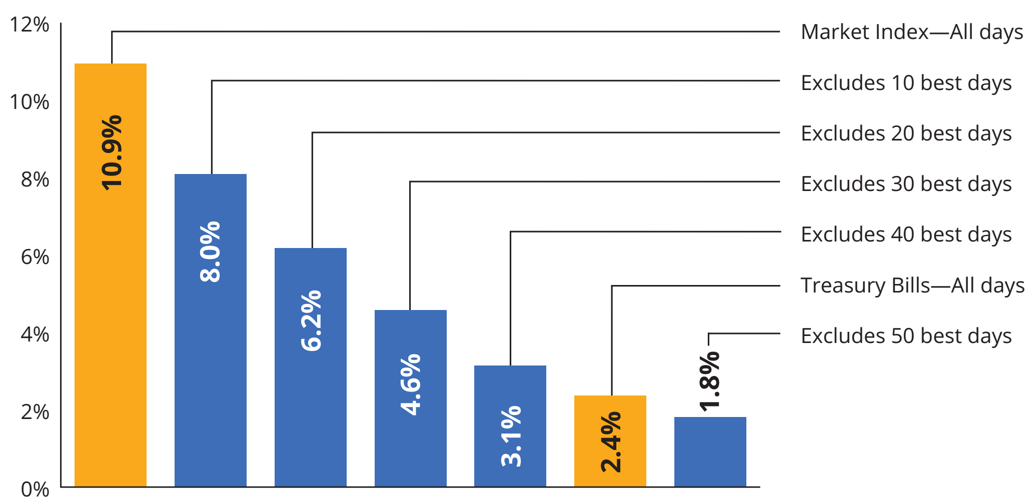
Penalties of Missing the Market's Best Months

S&P 500 Index Average Annual Total Returns: 1995–2024



Penalties of Missing the Market's Best Days

S&P 500 Index Average Annual Total Returns: 1995–2024



Avoiding the market's downs may mean missing the market's ups. What are the consequences of missing some of the best months or days? If you miss too many, you would do better to invest in lower-risk Treasury Bills.

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Data Sources: Ned Davis Research and Hartford Funds, 2/25.

Getting Beyond the Illusions

What practical steps can investors take to help protect themselves from these illusions and the potential effect on their overall portfolios? Consider a few simple, usually underemphasized, strategies that can have a significant impact on how you invest your money.

1 Don't Go It Alone

While a financial professional can help you find appropriate investments for your financial goals, they also play a crucial role by acting as a counter to the market's mind games that can tempt even experienced investors. A financial professional can also help you learn more about how the market works and its history.

2 Create A Strategy

What are the necessary components of a financial plan?

- Investment time horizon of five years or longer
- Specific dollar amount and target date for each financial goal
- Realistic, assumed rate of return for your investments
- Income distribution plan that lasts for life
- Estate planning to ensure maximum wealth transfer to your heirs

Your financial professional can help you design a plan to fit your goals and preferences.

3 Asset Allocation

No one can predict the future, including how well a specific type of investment will perform next year. Your financial professional can help you understand the advantages of how a well-diversified portfolio, consisting of a variety of asset classes, can help provide more balanced returns. Yes, a diversified portfolio means that at any given time, you will probably be putting money into an asset class that is underperforming or even experiencing negative returns. However, that same asset class may very well be the best performer in the near future. Asset allocation may not be appropriate for all investors, especially those interested in directing their own investments.

4 Systematic Investing[9]

A long-term systematic investment plan provides several advantages, some of which are psychological in nature. First, it allows you to take advantage of the normal shifts in the market by purchasing more shares when the market is low and fewer when it is high, which reduces, over time, the average cost per share for each dollar invested. Second, it helps eliminate the stress and uncertainty of deciding when to invest. Third, it strengthens your investment discipline by helping you maintain a long-term perspective (i.e., time in the market rather than timing the market). Ask your financial professional why systematic investing may be a better approach than trying to time the market's ups and downs.

[9] Continuous or periodic investment plans neither ensure a profit nor protect against loss in declining markets. Because systematic investing involves continuous investing regardless of fluctuating price levels, you should carefully consider your financial ability to continue investing through periods of fluctuating prices.

A Clearer Perspective

Working with a financial professional can provide you with numerous benefits. A financial professional can help you:

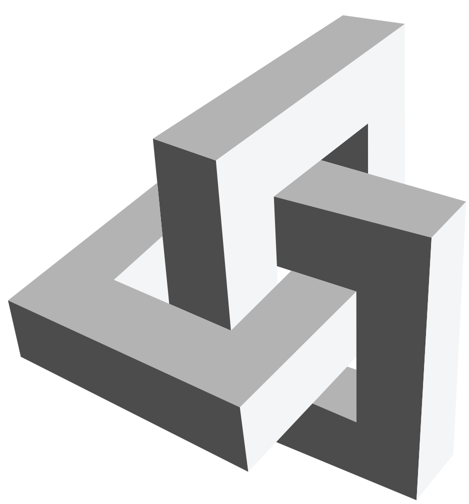
- Calculate your financial needs and plan your financial goals
- Determine an appropriate mix of investments to help achieve them
- Ensure that you are not taking an unnecessary amount of risk to reach those goals
- Maintain financial discipline in the face of bull market exuberance and bear market despair
- Educate you on different types of investments and their tax implications

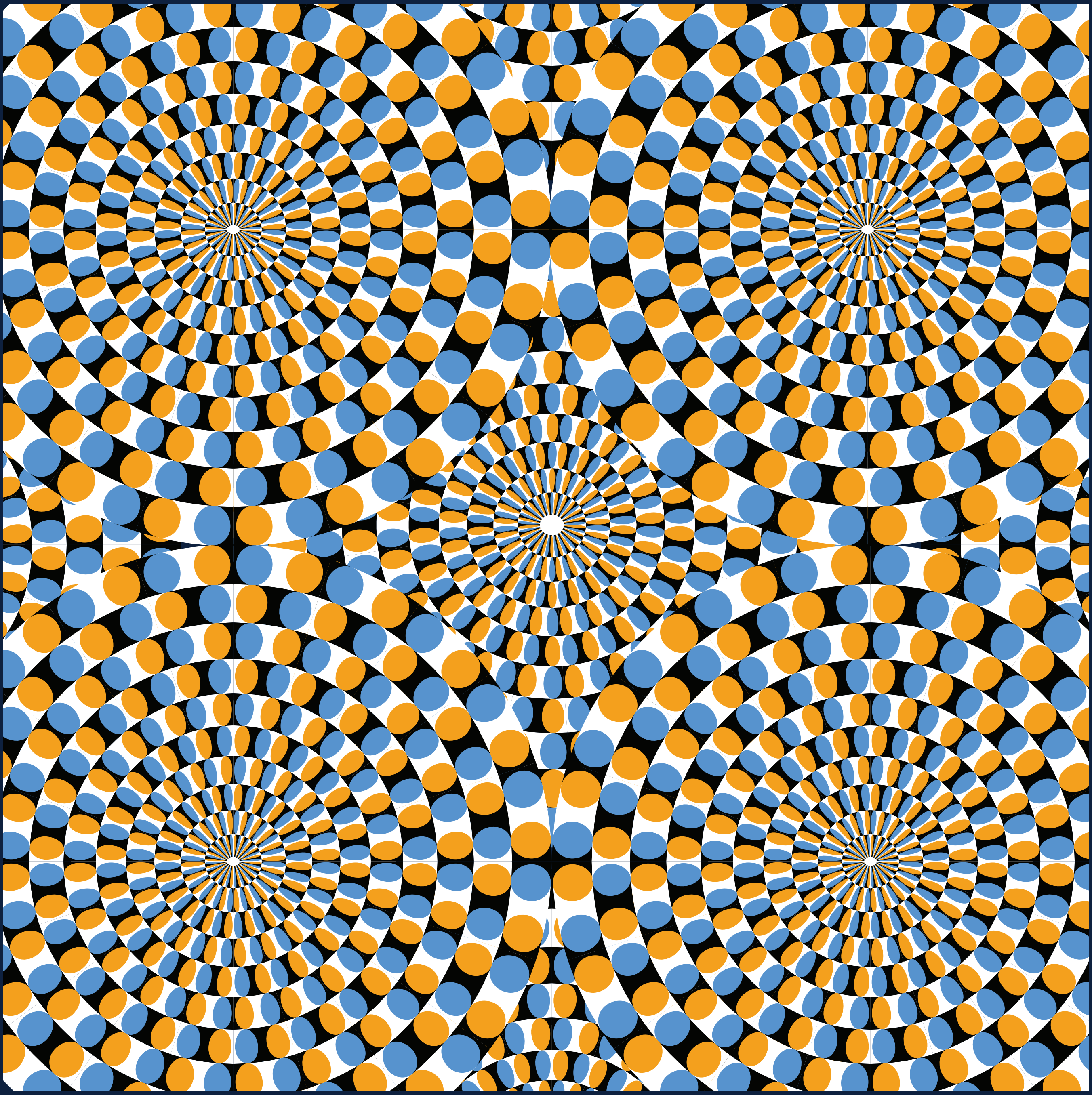
Timing Isn't Everything

"Far more money has been lost by investors preparing for [market] corrections or trying to anticipate [market] corrections than has been lost in the [market] corrections themselves." –Peter Lynch[10]

That's why it's important to have the support of a financial professional who can help you short-circuit your instinctive reactions to natural market fluctuations and practice disciplined investing.

[10] Source: *The Wisdom of Great Investors*, morningstar.com, 1/27/10





Let your eye drift to the centers of these wheels. Are the wheels rotating?

HARTFORDFUNDS

Our benchmark is the investor.®

Investing involves risk, including the possible loss of principal. Fixed income security risks include credit, liquidity, call, duration, and interest-rate risk. As interest rates rise, bond prices generally fall.

Diversification does not ensure a profit or protect against a loss in a declining market.

Hartford Funds Distributors, LLC, Member FINRA.

All information and representations herein are as of 12/24 unless otherwise noted.

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