Year-End Investor Checklist

As we head toward the end of year, it is a good time to do an investment checkup and put a plan in place moving forward. Both stock and bond markets have been on a rollercoaster ride over the past number of years starting with the pandemic in 2020. With geopolitical issues abroad, a new administration in 2025, and questions on the strength of the US economy, we have provided a few checklist items we believe can help keep you on track with your financial goals:

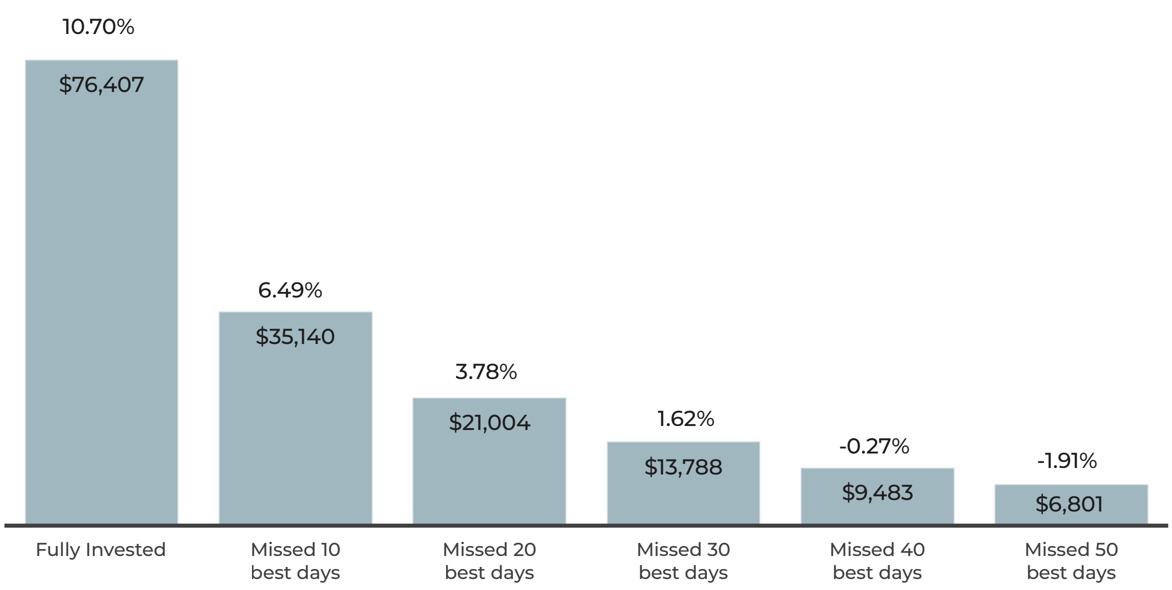
1. Stay invested.

As an investor there may be points in time you have considered bailing on the stock market. The pandemic in 2020 caused volatility in the stock and bond market, and in 2022 the overall stock market was down about 18%. However, the chart below emphasizes the cost of missing out on the best days of the S&P 500 index over a 20-year period ending 9/30/24. Time in the market, not market timing, we view proves to be a good long-term strategy.

2. Rebalance your portfolio.

From an asset allocation perspective, we believe it is important to know how you're allocated in stocks and in bonds. But things can get out of line and, over the course of the year, your allocation percentages can change from where you started. When this happens, you can be taking on more risk than you originally had allocated. We recommend that you review your

Returns of the S&P 500 Index*
Performance of a $10,000 investment 9/30/2004 - 9/30/2024



**Bloomberg Finance, L.P. The S&P 500 Index is widely regarded as the best single gauge of large-cap U.S. equities and serves as the foundation for a wide range of investment products. The index includes 500 leading companies and captures approximately 80% coverage of available market capitalizations as of 12/31/2023. Performance returns reflect the reinvestment of all dividends. An individual cannot invest directly in an index. Past performance is not a guarantee of future returns.*

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portfolio to put you back in line with your targeted risk level. For example, if your asset mix is 60% in stocks and you experience a nice growth rate during the year, you might end up with an overall allocation of 65% in stocks. We believe that it makes prudent sense to reallocate the 5% increase into non-equity positions to bring you back to the 60% target level. The same holds true when the opposite happens; you would want to increase your allocation in stocks in a down market.

3. Don't overlook the importance of bonds in your portfolio.

We believe that many investors tend to focus their portfolio on the stock market. This is understandable: The stock market usually headlines the news, and people are familiar with their own basket of securities that they follow. However, our view is that investors tend to overlook bonds as an asset class versus stocks. Bonds tend to act as a ballast against stock market volatility and, with the Federal Reserve starting the process of lowering interest rates, bonds could be in a better position moving forward. As you get older, we believe that bonds should play a larger role in your portfolio because they tend to be less risky than stocks. They may not be the topic of discussion at a dinner party or lead the national news, but we view that they should be part in a diversified portfolio. How much of an allocation in them depends on your age, investment time horizon, and your tolerance to risk.

4. Review account beneficiaries.

Things change and beneficiaries that will stand to inherit your assets should be considered on a regular basis. With busy work and family life, people may forget who they have listed as either a primary or secondary beneficiary in their retirement portfolios. Changes in careers and other life events can necessitate changes or adjustments in account beneficiaries. We recommend that you take the time to review these important items and make the necessary updates.

As always, if you have any questions and need any investment guidance, please reach out to a financial advisor who acts as a fiduciary in your best interests. Working with a trusted investment advisor can assist in handling these items and more.

For other Karpus insights, please see our website.

KARPUS INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

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