

Her top investing tips

1 Diversify your portfolio. Consider spreading your investments across various asset classes like stocks, bonds, real estate, or even alternative options like cryptocurrencies or commodities.

2 Invest for the long haul. By holding on to your investments for years or even decades, you can harness the power of compounding returns and ride out inevitable bumps in the market.

3 Do your homework. Dive into the fundamentals of your investments, assess the potential risks and be honest about your comfort level with risk.



About one-third of Ms Joylynn Tan's savings is now in assets such as healthcare index exchange-traded funds and real estate investment trusts. ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

Me&MyMoney

Becoming an entrepreneur opened her eyes to investing

Financial values imparted by father taught her the importance of using money wisely



Prisca Ang

Leaving a stable job at a hospital to become an entrepreneur made Ms Joylynn Tan reassess her financial position and put more thought into investing.

Around one-third of her savings is now in assets such as healthcare index exchange-traded funds (ETFs) and real estate investment trusts (Reits).

This is a drastic change from before, when she mainly stashed money away in her bank account.

Ms Tan, 31, says: "I invest in companies I strongly believe in, and avoid high-risk ventures. This approach allows me to maintain a level of comfort and confidence in my investments, knowing that I'm

supporting businesses and industries that align with my values."

Starting in 2015, Ms Tan spent seven years working as a clinical therapist at the Institute of Mental Health after graduating with a social science degree from Singapore Management University, where she majored in psychology.

The job was rewarding, but after she noticed there was a pressing need for more proactive mental health support, she could not ignore her desire to do something to address the problem.

In May 2022, she co-founded BRB Selfcare, an online platform that offers professional mental health services through text- and video-based support to people aged 13 and above.

She says: "More than just treating those already diagnosed with mental health conditions, I wanted to focus on prevention and overall mental well-being for everyone."

"Starting my own business was also a personal quest for greater

independence and the freedom to implement innovative ideas in mental healthcare."

BRB Selfcare's clients are mostly Singapore residents in their early 20s to late 40s. The platform has seen a 70 per cent growth in users since it was set up.

Getting the business off the ground came with its fair share of challenges, including financial constraints.

"I didn't know if my business would take off immediately, so I was cautious about committing to monthly or recurring services, such as telco subscriptions, office rental and banking services."

"We needed options that provided flexibility and cost efficiency," says Ms Tan, whose husband, 32, is a creative lead at a Singapore-based start-up.

She opened an account with digital lender Anext Bank because it had no fees. Her team members also relied on their own expertise and picked up skills through online courses.

This helped them build a minimum viable product – an early version of a product that is created to test its feasibility.

"I started out by bootstrapping the company, and we're currently

in the early stage of fund raising," says Ms Tan, adding that being a business owner has influenced her personal approach to investing.

"Cash flow is important in starting a new business, so we can reinvest our profits in developing the BRB Selfcare platform. As such, I prefer to invest in sectors I am more familiar with."

Q What is in your personal portfolio?

A Around one-third of my savings is allocated to specific asset classes. This includes investments in healthcare and tech index ETFs with low expense ratios and minimal tracking errors.

(An expense ratio reflects how much a fund pays for expenses like portfolio management and marketing, while tracking errors refer to the difference in performance between the fund and its benchmark.)

I've also invested in industrial and healthcare Reits, which maintain industry-average gearing ratios and long weighted average lease expiry periods, and are managed by teams with strong track records.

(Gearing ratios measure a Reit's total debt to total assets, while the

weighted average lease expiry period looks at tenancy risk by factoring in tenants' remaining lease in years and the area they occupy.)

My health insurance – including for hospitalisation and critical illness – guards against unexpected medical expenses, while term life insurance will offset my outstanding mortgage obligations.

I also have insurance savings plans that offer stable and predictable returns. I also have insurance savings plans that offer stable and predictable returns.

I maintain an emergency savings account with six months' worth of living expenses.

In addition to my individual portfolio, my husband and I have allocated a portion of our joint savings to cryptocurrencies as we recognise their growth potential and diversification benefits.

Overall, my portfolio combines the security of insurance savings plans with the growth potential of equities and cryptocurrencies. It aligns with my risk-averse investment philosophy.

Q What was your biggest investing mistake? Which was your best investment?

A When I first started, my biggest

investing mistake was attempting to time the market. During the Covid-19 pandemic, I could have invested in equities with attractive growth potential and valuations that were suppressed by the market negativity.

Instead, I waited for the markets to reach bottom and missed out on potential gains when valuations rebounded sharply. I experienced tremendous emotional and psychological stress from constantly monitoring the markets, and I learnt that it's not about timing the market, but time in the market that matters.

On the flip side, my most successful investment involved purchasing a tech stock at a favourable cost.

Learning from my past mistakes of attempting to time the market, I applied a disciplined approach. I meticulously calculated my earnings and percentages, and set a target selling price.

When the stock reached that target, I executed the sale, realising a considerable return on my investment.

The experience underscored the importance of setting clear investment goals. The profits from that investment also enabled me to diversify my portfolio, which is crucial for long-term investing.

Q Describe your lifestyle, and how your growing-up years shaped your perspective on money.

A I'm living at my parents' place as my BTO (Build-To-Order) flat was delayed due to the pandemic. It is a freehold four-bedroom condominium in the west.

I don't own a car, mainly due to the high certificate of entitlement premiums. I also live right next to an MRT station, and Singapore's public transport system is efficient and reliable.

When it comes to retirement, I'm not actively planning for it at the moment as I'm focusing on BRB Selfcare. I hope to grow the business as much as I can.

As for how much I'll need for retirement, it depends on whether I have kids and grandkids down the road.

As a ballpark figure, let's say I'll need around \$2,000 a month after retirement for essentials such as food and transport. I'm optimistic that the returns from my investments and the earnings from BRB Selfcare will cover my retirement lifestyle when the time comes.

I was fortunate to grow up in a stable household. My father was the sole breadwinner, while my mother is a homemaker. We enjoy a comfortable standard of living, which allows us to live and travel without financial constraints.

I have three younger brothers, two of whom are still pursuing their studies.

In our family, financial values were imparted to us early on. My father didn't dole out pocket money without us demonstrating our commitment to our studies. This taught me to appreciate the effort it takes to earn money and the importance of using it wisely.

The principle has been with me throughout my life. I've carried forward the ethos of living within my means, avoiding unnecessary debt and being grateful for what I have.

prisang@sph.com.sg