

Women's guide to finding the right advisor

Six questions to help you identify someone you'll feel comfortable working with as you pursue your goals

1. How many women clients do you work with and how have you helped them?

Our life choices and financial priorities, even our investing preferences, can differ widely from men's, says Jen Auerbach-Rodriguez, managing director of Strategic Growth Markets and client development executive at Merrill Wealth Management. "For instance, on average, we live longer, and we may need to take career breaks." Make sure the advisor you choose to work with can suggest strategies to help you [pursue your priorities throughout your life](#).

2. How often will we connect to discuss financial strategies and investment ideas?

Women are super busy, and they're looking for convenience. They also have an interest in learning more about investing and managing their money through all kinds of markets and life situations. Ask how accessible your advisor will be and what information and resources they have available to share about the markets, the economy and your financial life.

3. What mobile and digital resources do you have to help me save time?

Working with an advisor isn't just about face-to-face meetings and calls. Women have told us they also want the tools to help them manage all their financial tasks in one place,¹ including robust mobile resources and other digital platforms. Ask: What mobile capabilities do you have? What tools and educational resources are available online? Will I be able to see all my [banking and investing information in one place](#)?

4. How can you help me be better prepared for retirement?

Planning for a secure retirement is women's No. 1 financial goal, according to the Merrill study "[Women, money, confidence: A lifelong relationship](#)."¹ Ask about the [retirement strategies](#) they can offer, including how you might play catch-up to save more as you near retirement, and explore advice for tax-efficient investing and withdrawals. Inquire, too, about other issues of particular concern for women. For example, ask: Can you help me plan for the [rising cost of healthcare in retirement](#)?

5. What resources can you offer to help me pursue other important financial goals?

You may be aiming to buy a home, planning for future college costs or even thinking about launching your own business. In fact, women are starting nearly half of new businesses,² and [single female homebuyers](#) far outnumber single male buyers.³ Ask: What banking and lending solutions do you have? What resources and help could you give me if I wanted to launch a business? Do you have resources to help me save for my children's college education or support my parents as they age?

6. What haven't I asked you that I should ask now?

Finally, try asking an unexpected question like this — something that will help you get a better sense of an advisor's personality, values and skill set. "Connecting with a potential advisor on a personal level can help you establish the level of trust that women look for in an advisor-client relationship," says Auerbach-Rodriguez. "Remember, your advisor may end up knowing more about you and your finances than your best friend does," she adds. "You'll want to get to know them well, too."

¹ Merrill and Ipsos, "Women, money, confidence: A lifelong relationship," February 2022.

² Gusto, "Survey: Entrepreneurs Seizing New Business Opportunities Amid the Great Resignation," June 23, 2022.

³ National Association of Realtors Research Group, "2023 Home Buyers and Sellers Generational Trends Report," March 28, 2023.



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