

FOR FREELANCERS · A FREE GUIDE

The 4-Account Split.

A 5-minute system to pay yourself a steady paycheck from variable income.

Most freelancers run their entire financial life through one bank account.

Income lands. Expenses go out. The same account pays your rent, your software, your dentist, and — supposedly — your taxes. Whatever's left at the end of the month is what you "have."

It feels like simplicity. It's actually chaos with good lighting.

Income comes in. Expenses go out. Tax bill arrives in April and ruins everything.

The fix isn't more discipline.

It's structural.

The split.

Every dollar that comes in gets divided four ways the moment it lands. Four accounts. One job each. No overlap.

50%

→ *Paycheck*

Your steady monthly income. The only account you spend from.

25%

→ *Tax*

Sits untouched until quarterly estimates and April. You don't see this money.

15%

→ *Buffer*

Smooths the slow months. Pays your paycheck when no client does.

10%

→ *Profit*

Yours every quarter — to spend, invest, or reinvest however you want.

Set it up in 30 minutes.

Four steps. Do it once. Forget about it forever.

01. **Open three more checking accounts.**
At your existing bank, or online options like Wise, Revolut, or Mercury. No minimums, no fees. Takes about 30 minutes on a Saturday.

02. **Name them clearly.**
Paycheck. Tax. Buffer. Profit. If you can't name what an account is for, you'll spend the money in it.

03. **Set the splits.**
50% to Paycheck, 25% to Tax, 15% to Buffer, 10% to Profit. Every dollar of income gets divided this way the day it lands.

04. **Automate the transfers.**
Schedule auto-transfers the same day income arrives. Now your Paycheck account is the only one you think about day to day.

Watch a \$4,000 payment flow through.

A client wire lands in your business account. Before you do anything else with it — before rent, before lunch, before the tempting Apple Store balance check — the split runs:

A client wire lands.

\$4,000.

50%	PAYCHECK	\$2,000	<i>steady monthly income</i>
25%	TAX	\$1,000	<i>sits until April</i>
15%	BUFFER	\$600	<i>covers a slow month</i>
10%	PROFIT	\$400	<i>yours every quarter</i>

After three good months — \$12,000 in total — you'd have \$6,000 sitting in your steady paycheck account, \$3,000 quietly set aside for taxes, \$1,800 in buffer, and \$1,200 of profit to spend or invest.

The Paycheck account does the day-to-day work. The Tax account quietly does its job. The Buffer is what makes January survivable when no clients pay. The Profit is what makes the year worth it.

Three rules to make it stick.

i. Never touch the **Tax** account except in April.

ii. Never touch the **Buffer** unless you've had a slow month.

iii. The **Profit** account is yours to spend or invest every quarter.

After three months, you'll know your real monthly income, your buffer status, your tax safety, and your actual sustainable paycheck.

And the panic stops.

WANT THE EXACT SPLIT CALIBRATED TO YOUR INCOME?

smoothpaycheck.com ●

\$29 · 5 MINUTES · USE FOREVER

More writing like this.

After Hustle is a Monday newsletter on work, money, and design for people whose income doesn't fit a salary. Free. afterhustle.substack.com