



“Money makes money.
And the money that money
makes, makes money.”

– Ben Franklin

Compound interest means earning interest
on your interest—you can use the

Rule of 72

to approximate how long it will take for an
investment to double at a given interest rate

– USEFUL FOR –



COMPARING
INVESTMENTS



SAVINGS
GOALS



RETIREMENT
GOALS

HOW TO 72

Divide the rule number (72) by the annual interest rate (R)
to find out the approximate time (T) required for doubling

ANNUAL
INTEREST
RATE

YEARS TO
DOUBLE

72 ÷ R = T

– FOR EXAMPLE –

72 ÷ 3 = 24

3% ANNUAL
INTEREST
RATE

24 YEARS
TO DOUBLE

*
The Rule
of 72 only
applies to
compound
interest, not
to simple interest
calculations

COMPARING THE MATH

Although scientific calculators and spreadsheet programs have
functions to find the accurate doubling time, the Rule of 72 is useful
for mental calculations or when only a basic calculator is available

This table illustrates just how close the Rule of 72
is to the actual doubling time

Interest rate	Actual years	Rule of 72
1%	69.66	72.00
2%	35.00	36.00
3%	23.45	24.00
4%	17.67	18.00
5%	14.21	14.40
6%	11.90	12.00
7%	10.24	10.29
8%	9.01	9.00
9%	8.04	8.00
10%	7.27	7.20
11%	6.64	6.55
12%	6.12	6.00

DOUBLING IN ACTION



Here are some interest rates to compare—
as you can see, modest increases in rates
have a dramatic effect on the doubling time

Years	1.5%	3%	6%	12%
0	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
6	In times of historically low interest rates, it's especially important to start investing early			\$20,000
12			\$20,000	\$40,000
18				\$80,000
24		\$20,000	\$40,000	\$160,000
30				\$320,000
36			\$80,000	\$640,000
42				\$1,280,000
48	\$20,000	\$40,000	\$160,000	\$2,560,000



THE TAKEAWAY

Use the Rule of 72 to estimate your potential
savings. Time is money when it comes to
compound interest—the longer you wait to
get started, the less interest you'll earn.

INVESTING CAN BE RISKY

Not all investments are guaranteed—
some investments carry the risk of losing
money, even when made through a
financial advisor or financial institution



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Sources: All the Math You'll Ever Need by
Steven Slavin, BetterExplained.com