



# Steps to make doing your tax return easier

## Step 1 – Find out if you need to lodge tax return

Most people need to lodge. If you're unsure use the [Do I need to lodge a tax return](#) tool on the ATO website to find out.

## Step 2 – Create a myGov account

myGov connects a range of Australian Government online services. Employers, banks and other businesses give the ATO details about the people they work with. By linking your myGov account to the ATO they can add details in your tax return for you. This makes lodging your tax return quicker and easier.

To link your myGov to the ATO, you will need to confirm your:

- name
- tax file number (TFN)
- date of birth.

You can watch the ATO's video [How to create a myGov account and link to the ATO](#) for help.

## Step 3 – Fill in your tax return

To fill in your tax return you will need information about your:

- income
- government payments (e.g. from Centrelink)
- deductions

### The best time to lodge

Employers, banks and other agencies report information to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). If you wait until late July to lodge your tax return, the ATO will pre-fill this information for you. This makes lodging your tax return quicker, easier and more accurate. Those who don't wait for pre-fill may have their return held up in the system and need to amend their return when the information arrives.

### Income

Your income includes any money you have earned from all your jobs, for example:

- full time

- part time
- casual or odd jobs
- self-employment
- cash work.

You must also include money you earned in other ways, including:

- online activities
- sharing economy
- crowdfunding
- personal services income
- foreign income and overseas investments
- interest from bank accounts
- government payments (e.g. from Centrelink)
- owing a rental property
- share market dividends

No matter how you earn it, remember to include it in your tax return.

### **Deductions**

You may be able to claim deductions for some expenses related to your job. To claim a deduction for a work-related expense, there are three rules you need to meet:

1. You must have spent the money yourself and were not reimbursed
2. The expenses must directly relate to earning your income
3. You must have a record to prove it (usually a receipt)

Common deductions include:

- vehicle and travel expenses
- clothing, laundry and dry-cleaning
- home office expenses
- self-education expenses
- tools and equipment.

You can find out more about deductions you can claim on the ATO website at [ato.gov.au/deductions](https://ato.gov.au/deductions).

You must be able to show records, for example receipts, for any deductions you claim. You need to keep these records for at least five years. The ATO may ask you to show these records at any time.

You can lodge your tax return online at [ato.gov.au/LodgeOnline](https://ato.gov.au/LodgeOnline). A registered tax agent can also help you lodge your tax return.

**Important:** Some people who charge money to help with your tax return may be trying to scam you. Registered tax agents are the only people allowed to charge a fee to lodge your tax return. Check whether your tax agent is registered at [tpb.gov.au](https://tpb.gov.au).

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## Step 4 – Check your information is correct

You should check the information in your tax return is correct and make changes if you have more up-to-date information.

Once you've checked your tax return, you can lodge it. If you're lodging your own tax return it is due to the ATO by 31 October.

If a registered tax agent does your tax return you need to confirm the information they include is correct. They can help you to make changes if you need to.

## Where to get help

For more information, visit the ATO website at [ato.gov.au/TaxTimeResources](https://ato.gov.au/TaxTimeResources).

You can also talk to a registered tax agent for help.

## Resources

- [Income, deductions, offsets and records](#)
- [Deductions you can claim](#)
- [Your tax return](#)
- [Finding and using a tax practitioner](#)
- [Records you need to keep](#)

## Meanings of tax words

- *Tax return – A form you fill in each year and send to the ATO. On the form you tell the ATO how much money you earned and how much tax you have already paid.*
- *Deduction – Sometimes you need to buy things (like tools or special clothing) to help you do your job. The cost of some of these things can be used to reduce how much tax you pay. This is called a deduction.*
- *Income – The amount of money you earn from work, investments or selling assets.*
- *Tax agent – A person or business that you pay to manage your tax and super.*

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