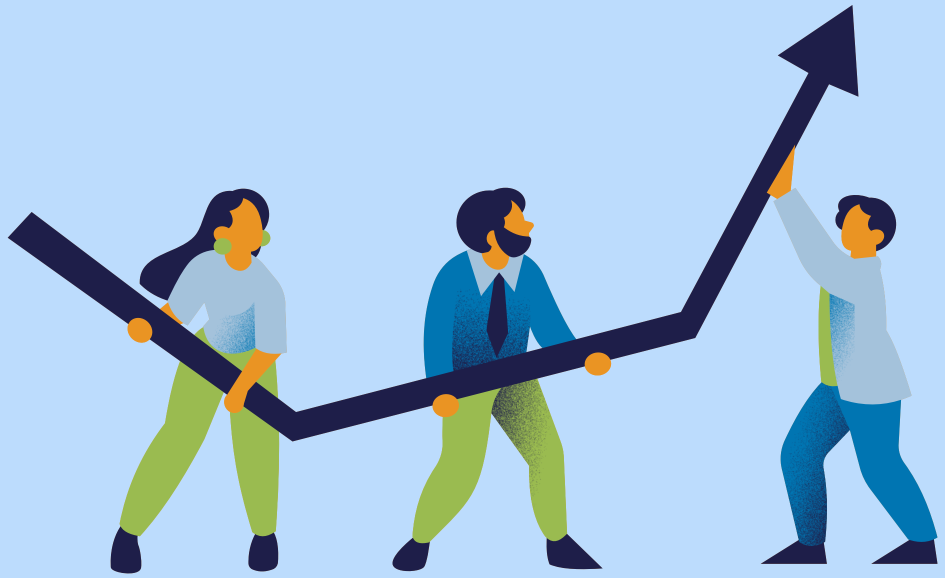

Trader Support Hub

Clarity | Confidence | Community

Start your trading journey without wasting money, false starts, or costly mistakes

I've been where you are

If you have downloaded this guide because you want to trade but you are not quite sure where to start or because you have already tried and it has not gone the way you hoped or because you've heard about the scammers selling bogus training out there then you are exactly the person I wrote it for.

I got into trading the same way most people do. I saw the potential, felt the pull, and started searching for answers. What I found was an industry that seemed designed to confuse, overwhelm, and quietly empty your wallet before you had placed a single real trade.

I bought courses that promised more than they delivered. I waded through thousands of hours of free YouTube content, most of it contradictory, and I made a massive banking mistake that cost me months of stress and real money.

Eventually, through a combination of expensive mistakes and relentless research, I found what actually worked for me. But I couldn't help noticing that almost everything I had learned the hard way could have been easier if someone had just told me the truth from the beginning and given me a little guiding advice.

That's what this guide is.

Who this guide is for

It is for the person who is curious about trading but genuinely scared of getting it wrong or losing money they cannot afford, of being taken in by a glamorous sales pitch, or spending months going in the wrong direction.

It is for the person who has already bought a course that didn't deliver and can't afford to get it wrong again. The industry and its unregulated training educators made it easy to get it wrong. This guide exists to help stop it happening again and give you a confident fresh start.

It is for the person with a full-time job, a family, and limited time who wants a clear path through the noise without having to wade through another hundred hours of content to find it.

And it is for the person who has already started trading but suspects, quietly, that they built it on the wrong foundation. A reset is not failure. It is the smartest thing you can do before you commit more capital to an approach you are not sure about.

This guide does not teach you how to trade. It exists to make sure that when you do start, you don't waste money, choose the wrong path, or get blindsided by things nobody warned you about. This is the foundation. Everything else builds on top of it.

Chapter One: Understanding the trading landscape

The first mistake most people make is choosing a trading style before they understand what the options involve. Social media makes this worse — the style that is loudest online at any given moment is rarely the one that suits most people's lives.

This chapter is not a beginner's glossary — there is excellent free content on YouTube covering the absolute basics, and there is no point repeating it here. What follows are the few concepts worth pausing on because most beginner content gets them wrong, glosses over them, or never mentions them at all.

Instrument vs Asset

Instrument

A financial instrument is a tradable contract or tool that represents or derives value from an asset. It defines how you trade or gain exposure to an asset.

- Options
- Futures
- CFDs
- Spread Betting

Asset

An asset is anything that has economic value and can be owned or traded. It represents what you are investing in. It can be physical or financial.

- Stocks (shares in a company)
- Bonds
- Commodities (gold, oil)
- Cash or Currencies

Day Trading

Active trading within a single session — all positions opened and closed before the end of the trading day. Day traders make multiple trades, anything from a couple per session to possibly dozens, watching the markets in real time for hours at a stretch.

- Time required: high. Realistically two to six hours of focused attention during market hours, most days.
- Capital required: moderate to high — though some futures brokers offer lower margin requirements for trades closed before the end of the day, meaning you can start with a lower pot of cash trading micro or mini lots.
- Suits: people who can genuinely dedicate real-time screen hours to the markets, enjoy fast-paced decision making, and can emotionally handle frequent wins and losses in quick succession.

You need extreme discipline and emotional fortitude to day trade. The urge to chase the market with trade after trade can significantly hamper profitability. It's probably got the highest beginner failure rate, and the excitement that attracts people to it is also what makes it dangerous when discipline slips.

Swing / Position Trading

Holding trades for days to weeks, capturing medium-term price moves. Analysis is done outside market hours — typically in the evenings or at weekends. Once a trade is placed, it only needs occasional monitoring.

- Time required: low to moderate. An hour or two for analysis most evenings, with occasional check-ins during the day — a quick look on your phone is often enough.
- Capital required: low to moderate. More forgiving on costs than day trading, as small position sizes are easy to trade.
- Suits: people with jobs or other commitments who want genuine market exposure without needing to watch screens all day. Arguably the most accessible style for working adults serious about building a trading income.

Trades can sit open for days moving against you before coming good. Not for people who need constant positive feedback and daily profits.

Algorithmic (Algo) and Automated Trading

Using coded systems — algorithms — to execute trades automatically based on pre-defined rules. The system works while you do not. You build the strategy, test it, set it running, and it executes without you needing to be at a screen.

- Time required during live trading: low. The algorithm runs whether you are at your desk or not.
- Time required upfront: significant. Building and rigorously testing a strategy takes time — weeks to months depending on your approach and experience.
- Suits: analytically minded people who enjoy building systems, want to remove emotion from execution entirely, and want trading to fit around a full-time job rather than compete with it.

There is a lot of upfront work, but it fits around other work and family commitments. Modern no-code platforms make algo building accessible without programming skills.

What you can trade

1. **Crypto**: A highly volatile asset class with extreme price swings and an evolving regulatory environment. Not ideal for beginners — it demands extra discipline and extra scepticism of the communities that grow up around it, which are particularly prone to hype and misinformation.
2. **Stocks & Shares**: More familiarity but comes with a hidden demand on your time: individual companies move sharply on earnings releases, profit warnings, management changes, and sector news, which means you need to stay across a constant flow of company-specific information to trade them responsibly.
3. **Commodities**: Speculating on the price of physical goods — oil, gold, silver, natural gas, wheat, copper, and similar raw materials. Prices are driven by supply and demand, geopolitical events, weather, and global economic conditions, making commodities genuinely reactive to real-world news.
4. **Indices**: An index tracks the collective performance of a group of stocks — the S&P500 tracks five hundred major US companies. Indices are highly liquid, trade during defined market hours, and tend to be less volatile than individual stocks or crypto. A common starting point for beginners finding their feet.
5. **Forex**: Trading currency pairs — much like exchanging your currency for holiday spending money, but on a vastly larger scale. It's the world's largest market, open 24 hours on weekdays, and can be traded across multiple styles — day, swing, or algorithmically. High leverage availability makes it both popular and a common starting point.

Where to focus

Forex, Indices, and Commodities.

These three markets are where most new traders should start — and where most serious trading education is built around.

They work naturally across day, swing, and algorithmic approaches, are deeply liquid so you can get in and out of positions at the price you expect, and respond to clear, trackable drivers — central bank decisions, economic data, global events — rather than the constant stream of company-specific news.

Stocks and crypto are worth understanding, but for most beginners, forex, indices, and commodities offer the cleanest starting point.

How you can trade — the instrument decision

Futures

Contracts to buy or sell an asset at a specified price on a future date used across commodities, indices, currencies, and interest rates. Futures are exchange-regulated, meaning genuine market depth and order flow are visible — a real advantage for day trading. They generally require more experience and a clear day trading strategy, and can be harder to trade through a prop firm.

Options

Options give you the right but not the obligation to buy or sell an asset at a predetermined price before a specific date. A time-based instrument used for speculation, hedging, or generating income, but the complexity around pricing, expiry dates, and strategy combinations makes it one of the steeper learning curves in retail trading and generally not where beginners should start.

Spread Betting

Speculating on whether a market will rise or fall without owning the underlying asset, with a stake per point of movement determining profit or loss. Available across forex, indices, commodities, shares, and more. For UK-based traders it carries a significant practical advantage: profits are currently free from Capital Gains Tax and Income Tax for most retail traders.

CFDs - Contract for Difference

Speculating on price movement without owning the underlying asset — similar in feel to spread betting, but with different tax treatment. You exchange the difference in price of an asset between opening and closing a trade, and like spread betting, CFDs can be used across forex, indices, commodities, and shares with leverage.

Putting it together — which instrument for which style

CFDs and spread betting are the natural home for swing traders, and anyone planning to use a prop firm for their trading capital. They are flexible, accessible, and well-supported across most prop firm challenges and retail brokers. For UK-based traders, spread betting adds the significant bonus of tax-free profits under current rules.

Futures come into their own for day trading: tighter spreads, exchange-regulated pricing, and genuine visibility of market depth and order flow give serious day traders a cleaner, more transparent environment to operate in. They are a more demanding instrument to start with, and most prop firms supporting futures operate under different and often stricter conditions than their CFD equivalents.

Options are a conversation for another day. The learning curve is steep enough that introducing them early is more likely to create confusion than opportunity, and you really don't need them to be a profitable trader.

For most beginners: start with CFDs or spread betting, get your foundation right, and treat futures as the next chapter once you're ready for the extra complexity.

What it actually costs to get set up

Educators tend not to tell you the monthly running or upfront costs for the tools behind each trading style. Here are the typical costs you should expect to pay based on the tools I use by style, so you can budget properly before committing to an approach.

Day trading setup

- Sierra Chart, including live exchange data fees ~ £40 /month
- Exchange fees for live data vary and can be avoided altogether with a funded live futures account
- Trade copier (routes trades to your live accounts / prop firm challenges) ~ £25

Swing trading setup

- TradingView (free tier available; paid tier links to live / prop firm challenges) ~ £15-70 /month
- Trade copier (routes trades to your live accounts / prop firm challenges) ~ £25

Algo trading setup

- Algo development platform ~ £120 /month
- Dedicated cloud server to run strategies continuously ~ £90 /month
- Trade copier (routes trades to your live accounts / prop firm challenges) ~ £25
- MT5 execution platform - free

Choosing a charting platform

There is no shortage of charting platforms competing for your attention, many of them expensive, feature-heavy, and designed to look impressively complex. Ignore them!

At the start of your trading journey the last thing you need is a platform that takes three months to learn and costs more per month than your initial trading capital.

What you actually need is something clean, reliable, and accessible — a platform you can pull up on your phone, your laptop, or your browser without installing specialist software or paying a premium subscription. The best charting tools for beginners are often the simplest ones, and several of the most widely used platforms in the industry are free or low cost.

Expensive and bloated is not better. In trading, complexity that does not serve your strategy is just noise and noise costs you money. A clear chart, with just the few indicators you actually use, and a platform that works reliably when you need it, is all you need to start. Many trading educators will recommend the platform they use during training, so it's worth seeing what they suggest first.

If you have already chosen a style and started trading, use this guide as an honest audit. Does the style you chose actually fit your life and your personality?

Chapter Two: Which style fits your life?

More beginners fail because they chose the wrong trading style for their life than for any other single reason. Not because they lacked intelligence or discipline or capital but because they chose something that their actual daily reality could never consistently support.

The most common version of this mistake is choosing day trading because it looks exciting and fast on social media, then discovering that you have a full-time job, school runs, and twelve genuine free hours per week — almost none of which fall during market hours. The strategy is not wrong. The match is wrong.

Work through these next four filters honestly before you move to any other chapter.

Which style fits your life - filters

Filter 1 - Time

How many genuine, uninterrupted hours per week can you commit to trading-related activity — not on a good week, but consistently, week after week, including bad weeks?

Genuinely consider when you can commit those hours. Randomly throughout the day? Just in the evening, or early every morning? Are you really available and undisturbed at US market open for a couple of hours most weekdays? Believe me, missing a day trade because you got called away just as the market gave you the perfect setup is more than frustrating. It's soul-crushing.

Most people overestimate their available time by 40 to 60 percent. Build your plan around your worst week, not your best. A strategy you can sustain through a busy period is worth more than one that only works when life is quiet.

Filter 2 - Personality

Any kind of trading requires exceptional emotional fortitude and discipline, but some styles naturally support people who struggle to avoid overtrading, or who hesitate to enter trades at all. Day trading can be long periods of nothing then sudden periods of action that can lead to emotionally charged trading. Swing trading gives you time to think through a decision and place trades with consideration in the evening or early morning before work — leaving you free to focus on the day job during the hours that matter for it.

If you are lacking in experience, emotional fortitude, and discipline, look seriously at ways that protect your capital from yourself. Algo trading may be your best route or you'll need to work hard to master one strategy on one asset until the right level of discipline develops.

Which style fits your life - filters

Filter 3 - Risk tolerance

Risk tolerance is usually framed as the amount you can comfortably tolerate losing. What's rarely mentioned is how you'll feel about leaving trades open overnight or over a weekend.

A lot of serious market-moving events happen overnight, and an open position can cost you sleep and have you waking in the night to check on it.

- Swing trading typically requires positions to stay open for days or weeks while the trade develops
- Day trading closes everything out by end of day so you can sleep soundly knowing you have no exposure in the market overnight
- Algo trading is flexible: set your portfolio to close out daily, close every Friday night and reopen Monday, or run it like a regular swing position — the choice is yours

Filter 4 - Capital

Your biggest investment early on is likely to be in your education, and if that means little left over for funding an account, it can still be worth it, provided (and this is a big if) you choose the right course that returns genuine results.

There are plenty of prop firm challenges that can return your training investment within a few months and then start funding your own trading accounts.

The aim of this guide is to help you make an informed choice that suits your personality and time commitments, so you're trading profitably in the shortest realistic timeframe for you

A serious word about algo trading for people with full-time jobs

If you work full time, have limited screen time during market hours, and recognise that your emotional reactions to losses might be a risk to your results, algorithmic trading deserves serious consideration. Not as a complicated alternative, but as the option most honestly suited to the life most working adults actually lead.

- Your strategy works while you are in meetings, with your family, or asleep
- It removes the most common causes of beginner losses: FOMO trades, revenge trading, overtrading out of boredom
- The upfront investment in building and testing a strategy pays back consistently once it is running
- It is not passive income, it requires monitoring, refinement, and honest assessment and modification when markets change
- For someone with the right mindset and the willingness to invest time and cost upfront, it is the most sustainable trading approach for a busy life

I love day trading and have been involved in it for a long time, but I also run an algo portfolio that swing trades through the week and closes out on a Friday night. I honestly love both — but so often there's stuff I want to do during the day, and being able to just walk away from the screen, knowing my automated system is still trading multiple markets 24/5, is a wonderful feeling.

Chapter Three: What trading actually feels like

Nobody in the trading education industry has a financial incentive to tell you this. So I will. The first months of trading feel uncomfortable for almost everyone. Not because they are doing it wrong. Because they are doing something genuinely difficult.

The people who make it through this period are not more talented than the people who quit. They are more prepared for the discomfort. And the single most effective form of that preparation is knowing what normal looks like, so that when it happens to you, it doesn't feel like failure.

No trading strategy has a 100% win rate. In fact, many profitable strategies win only around 55% of the time and a few do well with a win rate as low as 40%. It all depends on how big the wins are compared to the losses. The key is knowing what is genuinely normal for your style of trading. Some algo strategies have fantastic months returning 10–20%, then a couple of months doing nothing or even drawing down. That is the nature of the system, not a sign it is broken.

How to deal with drawdowns

A drawdown is the drop in your account value from a peak to a trough before it recovers. Every strategy has them. The question is not whether you will experience one — you will, but whether you understand what a normal drawdown looks like for your approach, so you can tell the difference between a strategy going through a rough patch and a strategy that is genuinely broken.

Before you go live with any strategy, understand what a normal drawdown looks like for that approach. Then write down what you will do when it happens - practically, not emotionally. This exercise alone will save most beginners from their most expensive mistake: sitting on the sidelines and watching the market bounce back without them.

You are going to experience moments of real exuberance during winning runs, and a sickening feeling when profits get eaten up by a drawdown. Prepare for that feeling by knowing your numbers from backtesting and demo trading.

Being part of a like-minded trading community helps enormously — people who can encourage each other and share experience and knowledge. Some trader training companies run these groups well. Others, especially public groups, are a chaotic mass of inexperienced opinions with very little moderation or professional support. In my opinion, avoid open public forums altogether.

What the first year actually looks like — honestly

Almost everyone feels lost, uncertain, and frustrated in the first months of trading. This is not a sign you are doing it wrong. It is a sign you are doing something genuinely difficult. The people who make it through this period are more prepared for the discomfort, not more talented.

- At 3 months: you understand your chosen style, you have completed foundational education, you are demo trading with genuine intent and tracking results honestly. You are probably not profitable yet. That is entirely expected.
- At 6 months: you have moved to a small live account, you are following a consistent process, your losses are within your planned parameters. Consistent profitability is not yet the goal — a consistent, repeatable process is.
- At 12 months: you have real data on your own performance, you understand whether you have an edge, and you are making considered decisions about whether and how to develop further. Some people are profitable at this point. Many are still building. Both are completely normal.

You may have just felt a knot in your stomach at the thought of taking a year to make money trading. The reality is you may well be profitable sooner. Day trading took me a long time to figure out compared to algo trading, which only took a few months. Everyone starts from somewhere different and goes at their own pace, but recognise that trading is not a get-rich-quick scheme. It rewards slow and steady progress. The good news is you really can change your life with trading, if you're willing to put in the work and allow the time for it to grow.

Don't even think about quitting your day job until you have two years of consistent profits behind you and enough cash in the bank that a few bad months won't worry you. And if you are strapped for cash and need an urgent solution, trading isn't your answer. The pressure to pay bills will cause you to blow up accounts and make terrible decisions. As hard as it is to hear, this is the truth.

Fast Track: I just want to get started

Some people reading this have done enough research. They understand the risks. They are not going to be reckless. They just want someone to tell them what to actually do — clearly, honestly, without three more chapters of preamble.

This section is for you. Everything else in the guide is still worth reading, but if you are ready to move, here is the most direct path I can give you.

1. **Pick one style and commit to it**
2. **Find one credible educator for that style**
3. **Open a demo account and treat it like real money**
4. **Fund a live account or start a prop firm challenge**
5. **Stay connected to people doing what you are doing**

The most expensive thing a beginner can do is rush. Not because trading punishes eagerness — but because the mistakes made in the first few months, when knowledge is thin and emotions are high, tend to be the most costly ones. The weeks you spend in demo trading properly will save you more than any course ever will.

Chapter Four: The education minefield

If you have already paid for a trading course and felt short-changed you are not alone, and you were not naive. The trading education industry is a minefield of well-documented poor-quality content dressed up as expert guidance.

The barrier to creating and selling a trading course is extremely low. Anyone with a camera, a laptop, and a social media following can position themselves as an expert. The most visible educators are often the most heavily marketed not the most knowledgeable, not the most honest, and frequently not even active traders.

The cost reality — and why price tells you almost nothing

Trading courses range from £500 to £5,000 or more. Price has almost no correlation with quality. Some of the best structured beginner education is free on YouTube. Some of the most expensive courses contain less genuinely useful content than a well-curated free YouTube channel from a trader who actually trades live.

That said, paying £5,000 to learn a skill that can pay for itself many times over can be a genuinely great investment if, and only if, the course is the right one. Price alone tells you nothing about which side of that line you're on.

The copy trading and introduction fee scam

This is one of the most common traps in trading and almost nobody warns beginners about it explicitly. Read this section carefully.
The mechanism works like this: a social media trader builds a following, appears successful, and promotes a specific broker trading platform. Followers are encouraged to sign up through their link. The trader earns a commission for every account opened, regardless of whether the follower ever makes a profit. In some cases, the trader earns ongoing fees from the trading platform based on how much capital followers put in.

The trader's incentive is to get you to sign up and deposit. What happens to your money after that is secondary.

- The broker being promoted may charge significantly higher commissions than competitors, which is precisely why it is being promoted, not because it is better
- Copy trading performance is almost always shown during its best profitable period, not the periods of significant loss
- Some platforms allow the signal provider to take a performance fee even on small profits while you bear the full cost of losses
- The trader may not be trading the same strategy live that they are selling to you

The test is simple: would this person be recommending this broker or platform if they were not being paid to do so? If the answer is unclear, assume not and avoid them entirely.

Red flags — walk away if you see any of these

- Income claims: 'make £150,000 per month' or 'I made £1,800,000 last year trading'
- Lifestyle marketing: rented cars, private jets, hired houses — constructed to sell aspiration, not evidence of trading results
- No evidence of live trading — only backtested results, selected screenshots, or anonymous testimonials
- Pressure to buy quickly: 'this offer expires tonight' or 'only three places left'
- Vague curriculum: 'learn my secret strategy' without specific content listed
- Poor independent reviews or warnings on forums
- Upsell culture: the course is a funnel to a more expensive mentorship or signal service
- Broker recommendations with affiliate links and no disclosure

Remember: if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, then it probably is a duck. Don't be drawn in by the hype. Genuinely profitable traders and educators are keen to see you succeed and don't need to exaggerate what they do or achieve.

What good education actually looks like

- The educator demonstrably trades live using the same strategy taught in the course content
- The curriculum is sequential: foundations first, building knowledge and live market exposure gradually
- Realistic expectation-setting throughout: no income promises, honest about the difficulty and the timelines
- A structured practice framework — how to use demo accounts properly before going live
- A genuinely strong support group that encourages you and answers your questions

For people who have already bought a course that did not deliver

This is more common than the industry would like to admit. You are not foolish for having been misled when the marketing was designed specifically to overpromise and mislead.

- Assess honestly what you got: is there any genuinely useful foundational content in there, even if it is incomplete or poorly packaged?
- Keep what is useful and discard what is not — a bad course can still contain some good material
- Check your refund rights: in the UK, digital products sold with misleading claims may be subject to consumer protection legislation — worth checking if the purchase was recent
- Do not let a previous bad investment pressure you into a second one to try to recover the loss. That is the trading equivalent of revenge trading — and it ends the same way

Chapter Five: Tax — What you need to know before you start

Nothing in this chapter constitutes tax advice. Tax treatment depends on individual circumstances and changes over time. If you are generating consistent trading profits, speak to a qualified accountant before your next tax year. This chapter exists only to make sure you know what questions to ask.

If you are not based in the UK, your own tax position depends entirely on your local regulations.

Most beginners choose their first trading instrument based on what their broker offers by default, or what someone on a forum uses. Very few realise that this choice has direct implications for how their profits — and losses — are treated by the tax authorities in each country. This is worth understanding before you open an account, not after you have been trading for a year.

The main instruments and how they are taxed differently

1. **Spread Betting**: Tax-free profits for most UK retail traders — but this advantage only exists in the UK and Ireland, and losses cannot offset other gains.
2. **CFDs**: Profits subject to Capital Gains Tax above your annual allowance in most jurisdictions — but losses can offset other gains, making CFDs more flexible than spread betting for tax purposes.
3. **Direct Share Trading**: Generally treated as capital gains activity — tax-efficient wrappers like ISAs in the UK, or equivalent accounts in other countries, can shelter gains entirely.
4. **Prop Firm Pay outs**: Almost universally treated as earned income rather than capital gains — expect to pay income tax rates, not the more favourable CGT rates, on anything a prop firm pays you.
5. **Futures**: Tax treatment varies significantly by country — in the US futures benefit from a highly favourable 60/40 rule, while most other jurisdictions treat them similarly to CFDs.

Records every trader should keep — from day one

Not tax advice. Just the minimum that protects you wherever you are based.

Most traders think about record keeping after something goes wrong. By then it's often too late to reconstruct what's needed accurately. Start from your first trade — not when you feel like you're making enough to worry about it.

Keep these — consistently:

- Every deposit and withdrawal from your trading account
- Profit and loss records by tax year — your broker's monthly statements are sufficient
- Fees paid to brokers, platforms, data providers, and prop firms
- Prop firm payouts — kept separate from other income records
- Challenge fees paid — potentially deductible depending on your jurisdiction
- Education and software costs — keep receipts and let your accountant advise

How to store it:
A dedicated cloud folder organised by tax year. Download broker statements monthly. Five minutes a month now saves weeks of reconstruction later.

Tax years run on different calendars — UK is April to April, US and most others January to December, Australia July to June. Know your period and organise accordingly from the start. Always verify your position with a qualified tax adviser in your jurisdiction.

Prop firms — what they actually are

A proprietary trading firm (prop firm) provides traders with live demo accounts (simulated trading). Your personal financial risk is limited to the evaluation fee you pay upfront, which may be refunded if you pass the challenge. This makes prop firms attractive to people who want significant market exposure without risking large amounts of personal capital. But the mechanism is more nuanced than the marketing suggests.

Typically the capital behind funded accounts is simulated rather than real money placed directly at risk by the firm. You're trading what's effectively a live demo environment, with the firm paying out profits from its own balance sheet when you perform well — not necessarily putting your specific trades into the live market with real capital behind them.

This isn't a scam; it's simply how most of the industry is structured. But it's worth understanding clearly, because it changes how you should think about what a 'funded account' actually means.

You never actually trade a live account placing trades into a real exchange. Your challenge and live accounts are simulated trading. When you receive a pay out it will be paid against an auto generated invoice for services provided by you.

How the challenge system works

To receive a funded account, you first complete an evaluation, typically called a challenge. This is a demo trading period in which you must hit a profit target while staying within strict risk limits: a maximum daily loss and a maximum overall drawdown. Pass, and you receive a funded account. Fail by hitting a loss limit, missing the profit target, or breaking a rule and you lose your challenge fee.

- Typical challenge fee: £100 to £900 depending on the firm and the account size being evaluated for
- Typical profit split on a funded account: 70 to 90 percent to you, the remainder to the firm
- Most firms scale funded accounts upward as you demonstrate consistent results

Advantages

- Access large trading capital without risking large personal funds
- Risk management rules act as a built-in discipline framework
- Generous profit splits once funded
- Removes the capital barrier for people who want to trade meaningfully
- Works well across most trading styles — only a few firms explicitly permit automated systems

Disadvantages

- Pass rate for most challenges is 10 to 20 percent — most people fail
- The pressure of challenge rules changes behaviour under stress
- Most fail not from poor trading but from never operating under rigid daily loss limits before
- Repeated challenge fees while developing is a real and underacknowledged cost
- Quality varies significantly — some firms are excellent; some fail to pay out at all

Red flags in the prop firm industry

- Profit targets that are unrealistically high relative to the drawdown limits, the maths simply does not work without taking excessive risk
- Brokers within the challenge system known for poor execution or deliberately wide spreads
- No verifiable track record of paying out funded traders — check independent forums, not testimonials on the firm's own website
- Rules that appear designed to disqualify traders rather than test genuine trading ability
- Challenge fees that cannot be refunded or credited under any circumstances
- Vague, changing, or hard-to-find rules about what is and is not permitted

Be very careful when looking at online lists of prop firms that have 5 stars or say they accept your trading style or set up. You'll be surprised by how many actually let you trade all the way to a profit and anticipated payout only to find they reject your claim and terminate your account for a rule breach you never knew about.

Realistic starting capital by trading style

If you intend to use a prop firm, these figures don't directly apply to you — your starting capital is simply the cost of the challenge you choose.

- Algo trading: can be built and tested with minimal capital; live deployment varies by strategy, whether swing or day trading the same as shown below
- Swing trading: £1,000 to £5,000 is a workable starting range with sensible position sizing
- Day trading: £1,000 to £5,000 on a spread betting account; £5,000 or more is realistic for meaningful activity on a futures account, where margin requirements for day trading are typically lower than holding a futures position overnight

The 'you can start with £100' claim is technically true and practically misleading. £100 on a leveraged account means any meaningful position size carries disproportionate risk relative to your capital. Start with the minimum that allows you to apply proper risk management — not the minimum you can get away with.

A final note

You know what to expect and what a good normal looks like. You know what to look out for in good education and what it includes. You know how to verify a broker or prop firm, understand your tax position, fund an account without getting burned, and tell the difference between a strategy going through a rough patch and one that is broken.

The rest is down to you, your honesty with yourself, your patience, and your willingness to do the preparation that most people skip.

I wish you every success.

Where to go next

The next step is finding the right education, the right prop firm, and the right tools for your chosen style. That's where most beginners get it wrong even a second time — not because they lack knowledge, but because they lack a trusted filter.

Trader Support Hub is that filter.
Inside the Trader Support Hub you'll find a personally vetted and regularly updated directory of trading educators, prop firms, and platforms - each one assessed against the same criteria set out in this guide. Every inclusion is one I would point a close friend toward.

Alongside the directory, the Hub offers weekly trader clinics, additional essential training, and a structured community of people on the same journey without the noise, the hype, or the ego that makes most trading communities a waste of your time.

Trader Support Hub

- Trusted educators shortlisted for you
- Know which prop firms have a payout record you can trust
- Find the support and guidance you need
- Access 15 years of hard-won experience

Opens 31st August 2026

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