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How to Install and Use
The Wash Sale Guard App

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Disclaimer

Educational and Informational Purposes Only: This PDF and the accompanying **Wash Sale Guard** application (collectively, "the Product") are provided for educational and informational purposes only. The Product is intended to assist in tracking trade activity and identifying potential wash sales; however, it is not a substitute for professional tax, legal, or financial advice.

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Accuracy of Data and Software "As-Is" While the author has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the logic and formulas within the Wash Sale Guard app, the Product is provided on an **"as-is" and "as-available" basis.** The author makes no warranties, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, completeness, or reliability of the calculations. The user assumes all risk for any errors or omissions in the data tracking or reporting.

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Note: The Wash Sale Guard app is expressly designed for desktops, laptops, and tablets – not mobile.

First Steps / Initial Setup

1. When you click on the access link for Wash Sale Guard app, you'll notice that it is a Google Sheets workbook. In the upper left corner, beside the Google Sheets green icon, you'll see the name of the workbook. It will say Wash Sale Guard 5.5 MASTER or something similar (the version number will increase over time as I make revisions to the app).

   The first step is to **make your own copy of the workbook.** Rename it to anything you want it to be – just avoid hyphens/dashes, quotation/question marks, or exclamation points. Rename the file to something that you can easily remember. Using your initials and the calendar year in the name may be helpful.

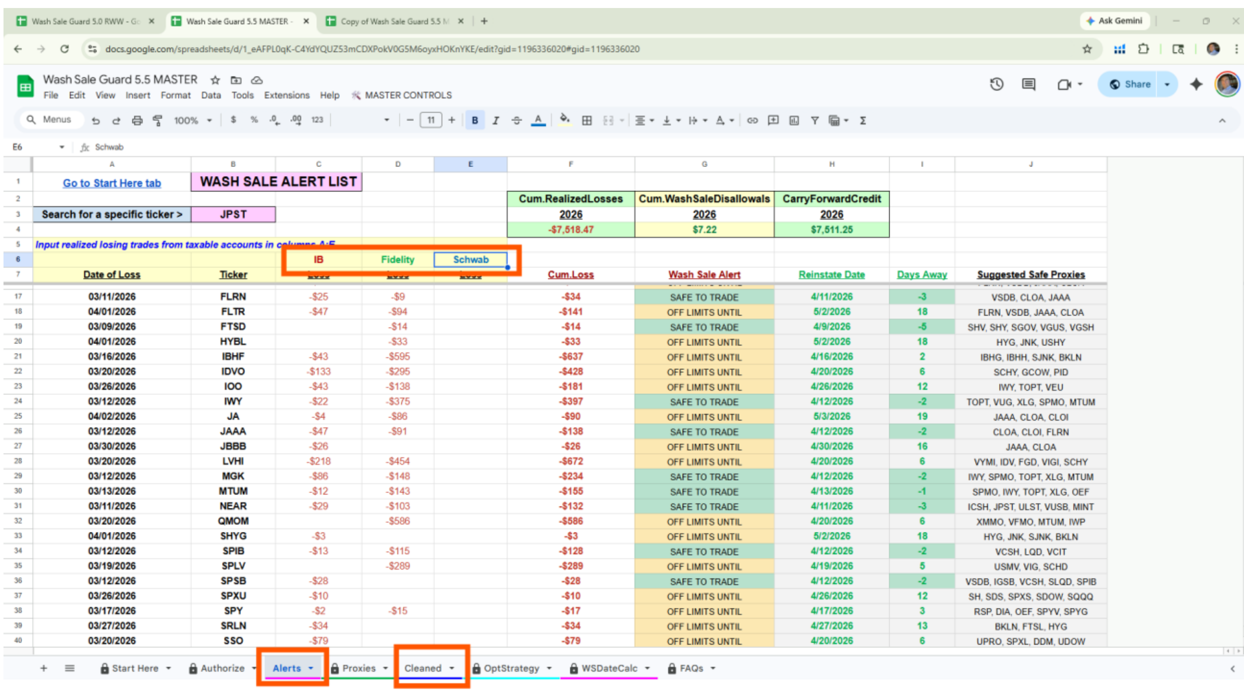
   To do this, hover just below the file name to the File (it's a pull-down menu), then click **Make a copy**. You'll notice that it defaults to "Copy of Wash Sale Guard 5.5 MASTER."

This is where you can input your own file name. Once you've input your own name for the app, click the blue button at the bottom that says **Make a Copy**.

Note: If the app triggers a Request to Authorize, please jump to Step 4 below, then return to Step 2.

2. Customize the names of brokerage firms

To get up and running asap, I recommend diving right in and entering your first losing trades from taxable brokerage accounts. (Remember, Tax Loss Harvesting is NOT relevant when you realize losses in qualified accounts – like IRAs, 401Ks, or HSAs).



At the bottom of the workbook, you'll see 8 tabs. Click on the **Alerts tab** (underlined in magenta). In cells C6:E6, you''l see that the default brokerage firm names for the app are IB (which stands for Interactive Brokers), Fidelity, and Schwab. You can change any of these brokerage names according to your needs. You may just have one brokerage firm; that's fine. Let's say it's E-Trade. In that case, just mouse on to cell C6 and type in "E-Trade" instead of "IB". To remove the second and third brokerage firms in cells D6 and E6, mouse into these cells and hit the Delete key.

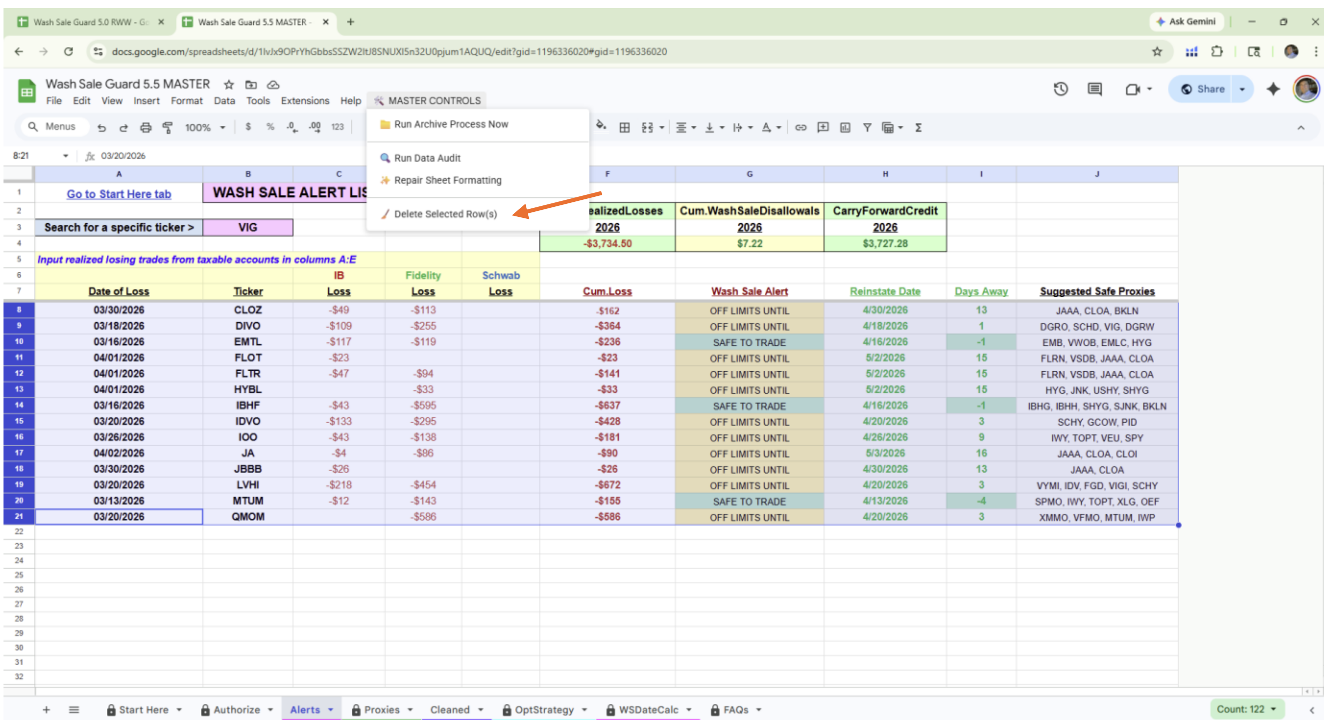
You don't have to fill in losing trade data into columns D and E if you only trade through one brokerage firm. The Wash Sale Guard app will ignore those columns if this is the case.

Instead of different brokerage firm names, you could conceivably type in different account numbers, aliases, or nicknames instead. That's your call. To keep things simple, however, I recommend aggregating all losing trades at each brokerage firm into separate/single columns, as the app's default settings suggest. Later on in this discussion, I'll show you how and where to scrape this data from your brokerage firm's trading platform.

Note: in Google Sheets, there's no need to File/Save your workbook (unlike Excel). It saves automatically.

Next, rename the default brokerage firms in the Cleaned tab. Follow the same steps as outlined above to rename the brokerage firm names in cells C5:E5.

3. Erase all sample (default) trades.



The Wash Sale Guard app comes with sample trade entries (all losing trades). You should erase them all. Here's how to do that:

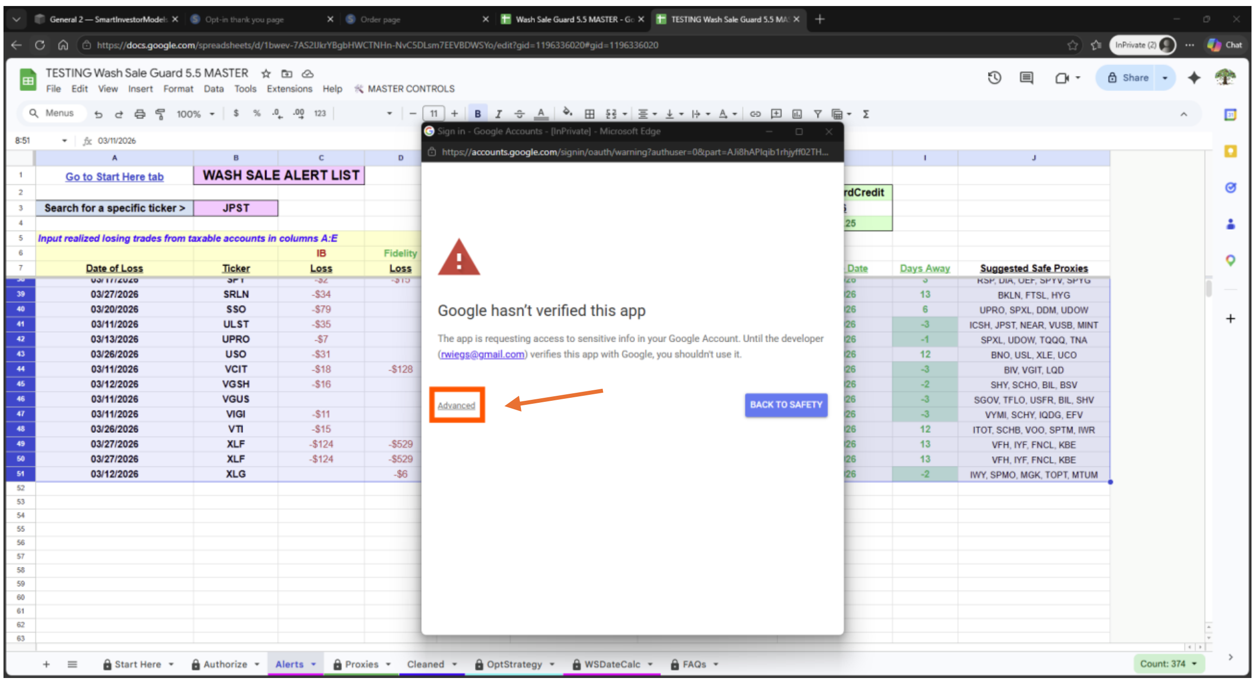
a) Click on the **Alerts tab**. Scroll your mouse wheel (or use the up/down pull-down bar on the right, or simply the arrow key) to make sure you're at the top of the spreadsheet.

b) Next, click on Row 8 on the left-most side of the spreadsheet. It should turn blue, and the entire Row 8 should be highlighted.

c) Scroll down to the last row, and while hitting the shift key on your keyboard, click on the last row of the spreadsheet that has data (i.e., past losing trades). At this point, all rows with data should be highlighted. If this is not the case, retrace these steps again from a) through c).

d) While the rows with data are highlighted, click at the very top of the soreadsheet where it says **MASTER CONTROLS**. At the bottom of this pull-down menu you should see **Delete Selected Row(s).** Click on that. The app will then ask you for permission to proceed. Click on **OK**.

Because you've just triggered the first automation for the app, Google is asking you to verify your copy of it. This is standard procedure. Follow the steps below for one-time authorization:



4. Authorizing your personal copy of the Wash Sale Guard App. Because the Wash Sale Guard app uses **Google Apps Script** to automate your trade tracking and audit logs, Google requires a one-time authorization to run these scripts in your private copy.

a) You will likely see a screen that says, *"Google hasn't verified this app."* This is standard for custom private scripts.

b) Click on the **Advanced** link in the bottom-left corner of that window.

c) Then, click the link at the bottom that says **Go to Wash Sale Guard (unsafe)**. *Note: It is labeled "unsafe" simply because it is a custom script you've just copied; your data remains private within your own Google Drive.*

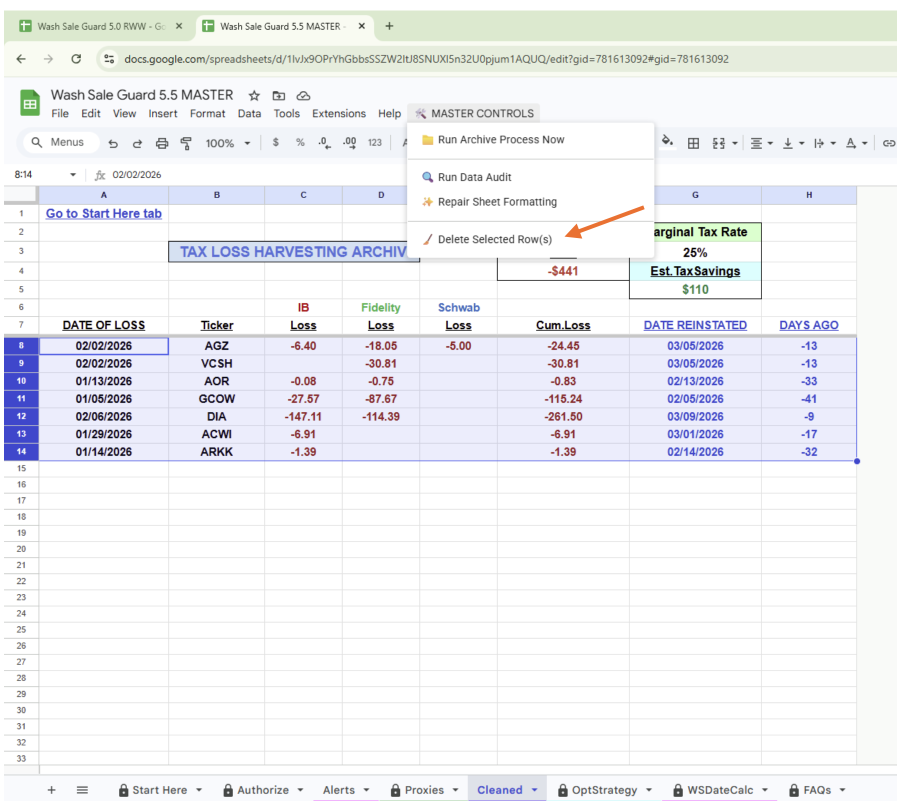
d) **Review Permissions:** A final screen will list the permissions the app needs (such as managing your spreadsheets and connecting to an external service for ticker data). Scroll to the bottom and click **Allow/Continue**.

Success! You will see a brief "Script Finished" notification at the top of your sheet. Your app is now fully functional and ready to use. ***You will not need to repeat this process unless you make a brand-new copy of the Master template in the future.***

Scroll to the top of the Alerts spreadsheet. You can now start entering losing trades from taxable brokerage accounts under the Alerts tab!

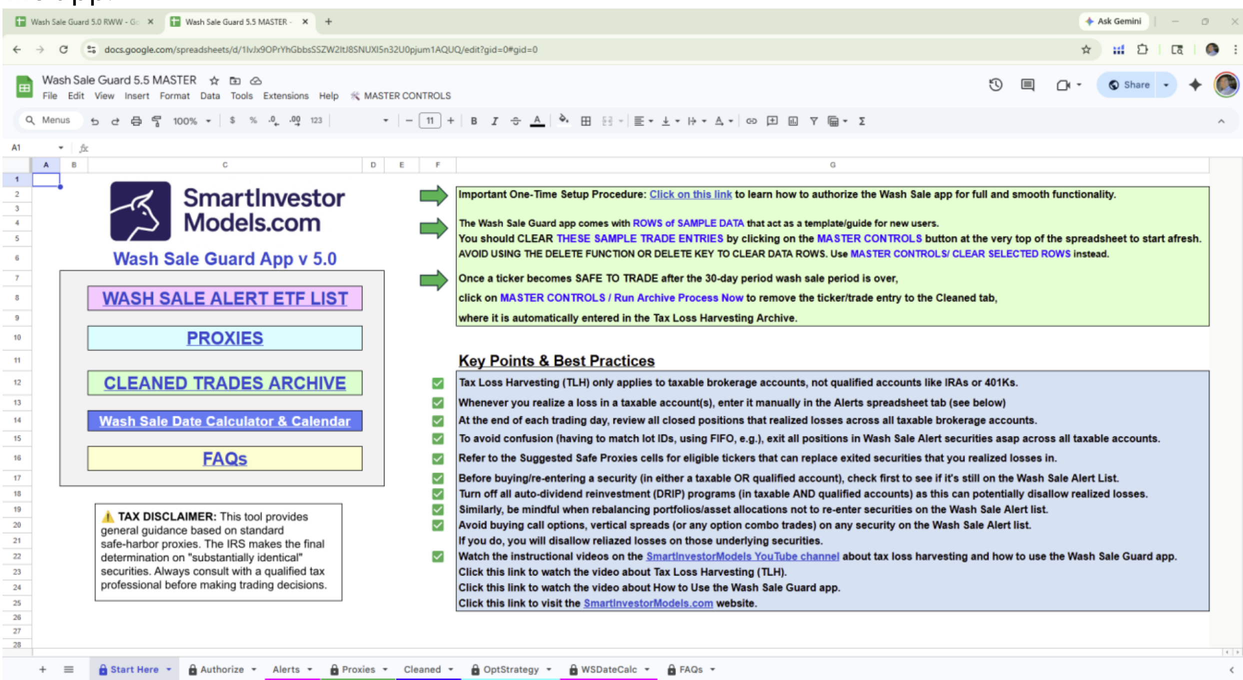
5. Erase all default trades from the Cleaned tab as well.

Follow the same steps from 3a) through 3d) to delete all sample trades in the Cleaned tab.

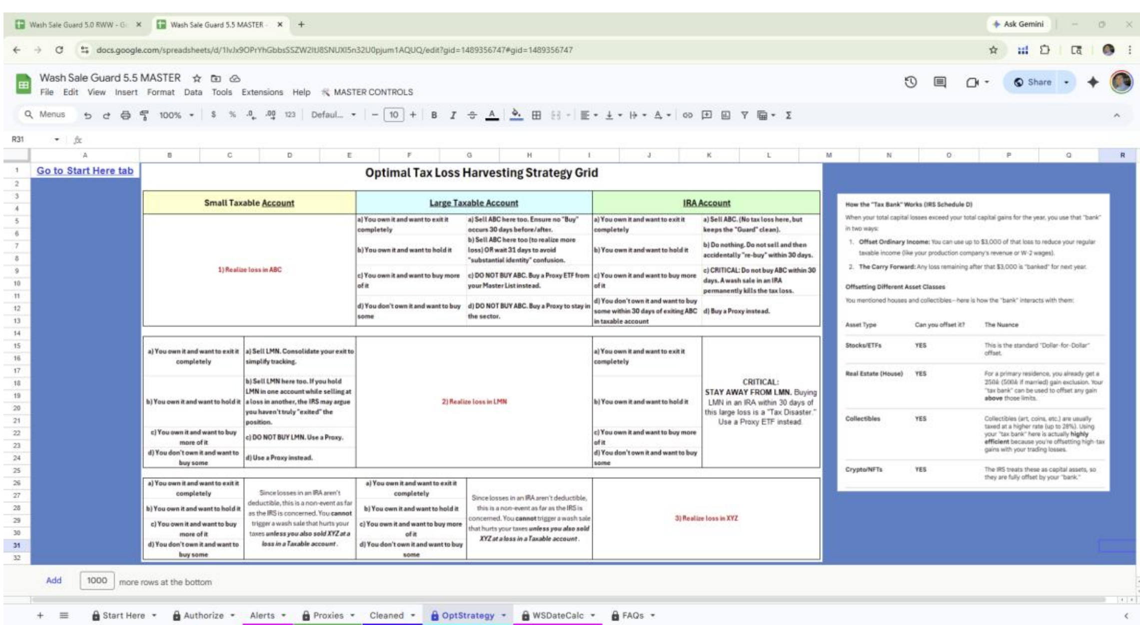


6. Review the Helpful Tips Inside the App

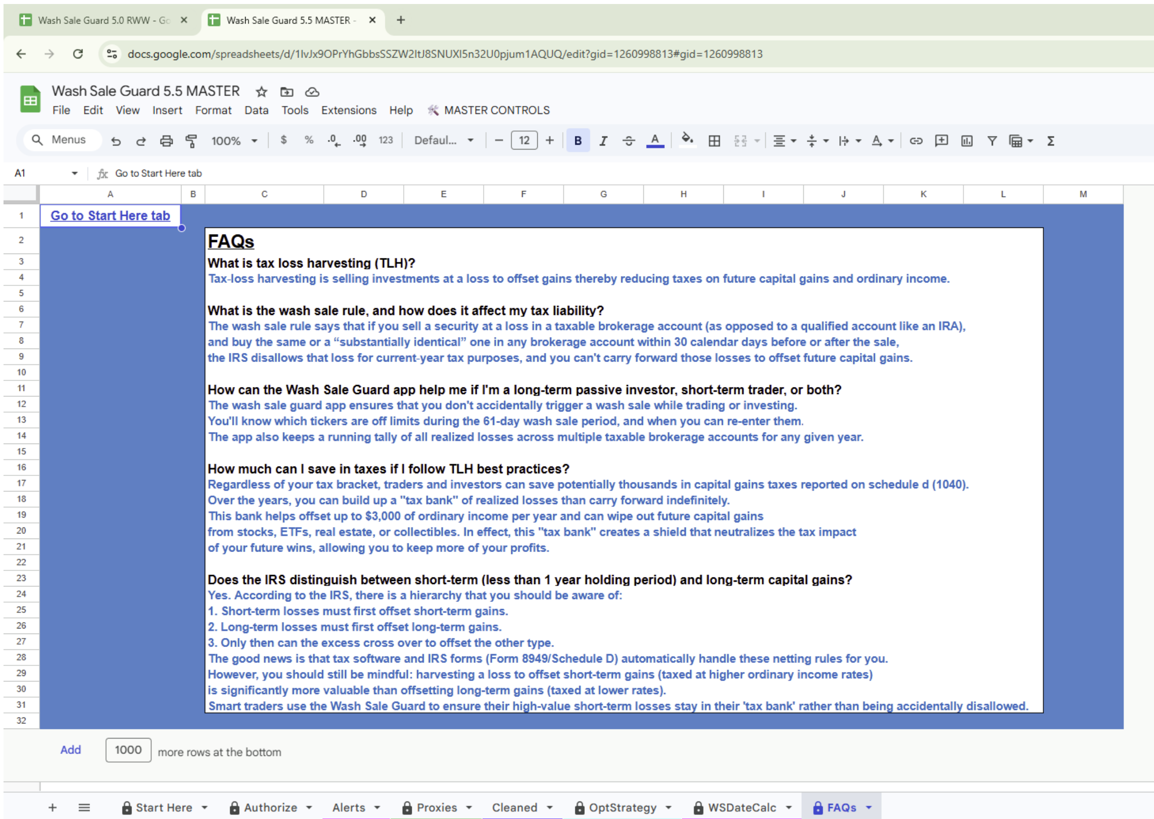
The **Start Here tab** is the command control center of the Wash Sale Guard app. It has links to the other tabs of the workbook, and has helpful summary tips for using the app.



The **OptStrategy tab** has an extremely useful tax strategy summary. It shows you what the tax implications are for most investors if you realize losses in a small taxable, large taxable, and qualified tax accounts. It also has a helpful summary about How the Tax Bank works.



Finally, the **FAQs tab** answers some basic questions that traders and investors may have about tax loss harvesting and where the Wash Sale Guard app comes into play.



Tips for Deleting and Entering Data

- The only tabs in the Wash Sale Guard app that you could possibly add data to or delete from are the Alerts and Proxies tabs. If you should ever need to delete a trade record from the Alerts tab (which maintains a recent history of tax loss harvested trades), or a proxy security from the Proxies tab (the Master Proxy List), the procedure is the same:

  - Highlight the row(s) of data that you want to delete with your mouse
  - Click on MASTER CONTROLS/Delete Selected Row(s)

  Avoid using the right-click Delete Row function that's built into Google Sheets, as this may throw off the macros embedded in the app.

- Helpful rules of thumb when **entering data under the Alerts tab:**

    - Always enter new losing trades at the bottom-most available row of the spreadsheet.

    - Maintain the same formatting from top to bottom. That is, each added row should follow the formatting from the previous one:

        - Date as (MM/DD/YYY)
        - Tickers in caps
        - Losses as a negative number

- The only other tab in the Wash Sale Guard app that you will possibly add data to is the **Proxies tab** (all the others are either static or run only off of the MASTER CONTROL macros.

  If you need to enter new Proxy Tickers, be sure to add them at the bottom-most row. The MASTER Proxy List is alphabetized in column A. To add a new Proxy Ticker, scroll down to the last row (it will be below the 500th row) and simply type in the new ticker (preferably IN CAPS) in the new row below the data in column A and hit Enter.

  The app will automatically alphabetize the new Ticker in column A, and concatenate (i.e., join) them together in the Suggested Proxy columns G and H.

  Next, to the best of your knowledge, input Proxy Tickers 1 through 5 in the new row in columns B:F. **If you're not sure which Proxy Tickers are appropriate for the newly entered security, type either of these prompts into any decent Chat GPT dialog window (I recommend using Gemini AI Plus or Pro):**

Sample Prompt (a): Ask AI to Find Proxy Securities

"I need to harvest a tax loss for the ticker **[INSERT TICKER]** and want to avoid an IRS wash sale. Please recommend 5 highly liquid, actively traded proxies that I can hold for a 31-day window.

The suggested proxies must have a high correlation to **[INSERT TICKER]** but track a different index, use a different methodology, or have a different manager so they are not considered 'substantially identical.' Please output the results in a table showing the Ticker, Fund Name, and a 1-sentence reason why it is a safe wash-sale proxy."

Sample Prompt (b): Ask AI to Find Proxy Securities

"I am updating the Master Proxy List for my Wash Sale Guard app and need 5 proxy alternatives for **[INSERT TICKER]**.

Please provide 5 highly liquid ETFs or stocks that act as a 'Wash Sale Shield' (similar market exposure, but legally distinct). Please categorize the 5 proxies for me:

1. The Direct Strategy Match (Closest correlation, different index)
2. The Liquidity King (Highest volume safe harbor)
3. The Thematic/Methodological Shift
4. The Broader Sector Anchor
5. An Alternative/Active Management option

Please present this in a clean table so I can easily copy the tickers."

Daily Update Workflow

Here is a **suggested daily workflow** you can follow for optimal use of the Wash Sale Guard app:

Start of Day: Before you trade or tweak portfolio allocations, go to the Alerts tab and review the tickers that are still OFF LIMITS. The Alerts tab will also show you any tickers that have recently become SAFE TO TRADE. Be mindful of these changes and restrictions. Remember that if you re-enter a security (in any account, whether taxable or qualified), that is still off limits, you will disallow the loss for future capital gains. In other words, you won't be able to preserve losses for that ticker for your carry-forward tax bank due to a wash sale violation.

Run Archive Process Now: To ensure the app is updated and has properly sorted and archived tickers, go to the MASTER CONTROLS pull-down menu and click **Run Archive Process Now**. A good time to do this is at the start of the trading day, after you have entered in new losing trades from taxable accounts, or after adding new tickers to the Master Proxies List.

Before you enter a new security: As a reminder, before buying any security during the day, go to the **Alerts tab** and check whether the ticker in question is still OFF LIMITS. If you don't feel like scrolling down the alphabetized list of tickers in column B to confirm ticker eligibility, simply type the ticker in cell B3 (highlighted in pink), and the app will scan the database to see whether the ticker is safe to trade. You should make this a habit before you enter trades on your trading platform!

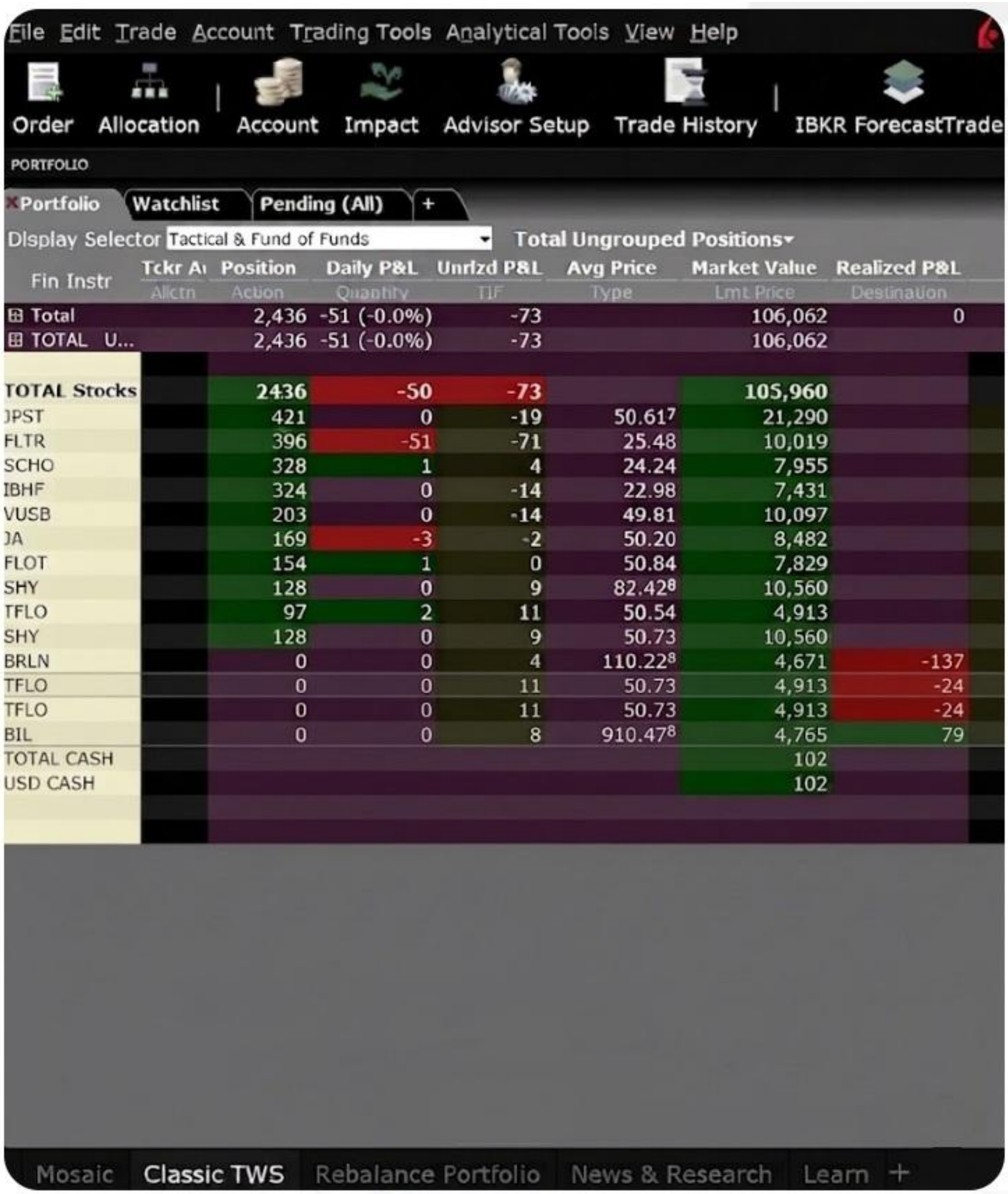
Enter losing trades immediately in the Alerts tab: Whenever you realize a loss during the trading day in a taxable account, enter the total loss (from multiple accounts if you took losses in more than one account) into the bottom-most row of the Alerts tab. Follow the formatting from the rows above. (Use the sample/default trades that come with the app as a guide). This helps maintain order and clarity and avoids bugs when running macros.

Remember that you should NOT enter realized losses from qualified accounts (like IRAs, 401Ks, or HSAs).

Go to **MASTER CONTROLS/Run Archive Process Now** to tidy up the entire workbook.

End of Day Closed Positions Review: At the end of each trading day (or whenever you rebalanced or tweaked allocations to portfolios), **check the list of Closed Trades from all taxable accounts across all brokerage platforms**. If you forget to check your trades across all taxable brokerage accounts, you may think that you're following wash sale trade window protocol, but the IRS doesn't isolate trades by specific brokerage firms. Instead, the IRS looks at activity across all brokerage accounts.

Here are two snapshots from **Interactive Brokers** and **Fidelity**, as examples of how to check for possible closed trade additions to the Alerts tab:

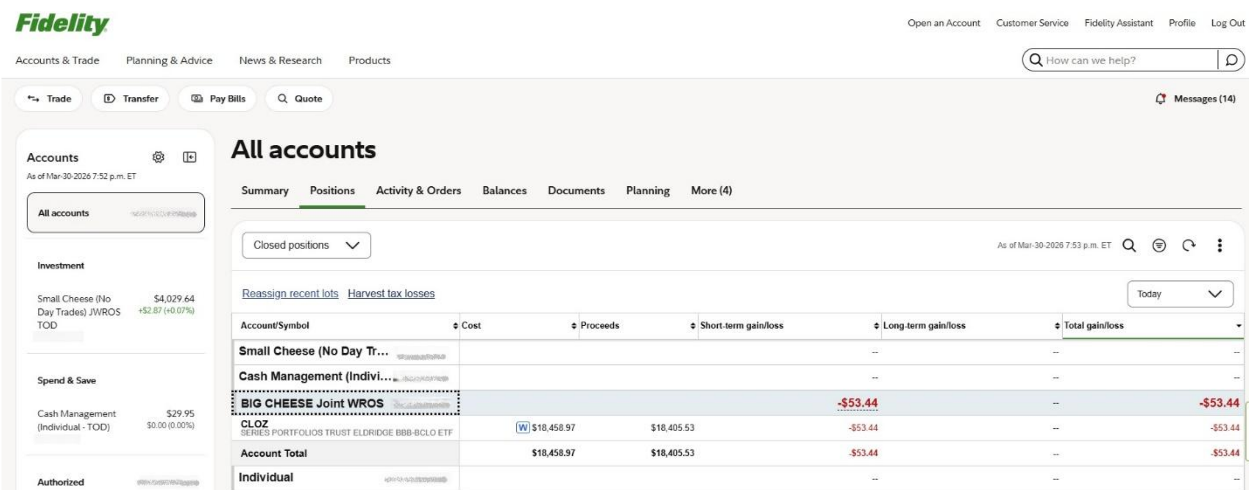


In this example from IB, make sure that you have selected the Group for all (taxable) accounts in the Display Selector box. You want to aggregate positions and trades that you made across ALL taxable brokerage accounts. Do NOT include any qualified accounts in this step. If you haven't set up a Group for all your taxable accounts, you can do this via the Advisor Setup/ Create Group button. You should name this group "Taxable Accounts Aggregate" or something similar.

Traders/investors should then sort the portfolio window under the Classic TWS tab by Position (from largest to smallest). Then, look for those rows where the Position equals 0. These are the tickers that you closed out during the trading day. Next, in the Realized P&L column, look for the closed out positions that are in red (negative). These are the tickers and loss amounts that you will enter under the brokerage firm column in the Alerts tab. For the Wash Sale Guard app and the purpose of tax loss harvesting, you should ignore all winning trades. They simply don't matter.

Note: You may have to configure your brokerage firm's portfolio window to show the relevant data (Account aggregate, Ticker, Position size, and Realized P&L).

Here is a similar feature taken from the **Fidelity** online trading platform:



In this example, at the end of the trading day, go to the All Accounts portfolio page as in the above image. Click on the All Accounts button in the top left corner (in gray). Next, under the navigation menu with the following headers "Summary/Positions/Activity & Orders/Balances/Documents/Planning/More" click on the pull-down menu where it is likely to default to Overview. Click on that pull-down menu and select Closed positions instead.

You should now have a page that looks similar to the one above. Finally, click on each taxable account listed in the left-most column. This will pop open a list of all the closed out positions for each account (by ticker).

You may have closed out positions with the same ticker across multiple accounts. In this case, you can sum them up directly in the relevant cell under the Brokerage Firms Loss column under the Alerts tab, or add them up manually in a separate spreadsheet or with a calculator.

For each ticker that you realized in within a taxable account, enter the Trade Date, Ticker, and the Loss amount per broker in the bottom row of the Alerts tab (in the first free row below the data). Do not type over existing losing trade entries!

Check and review that you've entered all tickers for which you realized losses across all taxable accounts!

Follow the same steps for the third brokerage firm (if you happen to trade via 3 brokers). The Wash Sale Guard app is currently limited to 3 brokerage firm entries (as most traders/investors use 2 brokerage firms at a time).

After entering all losing trades, go to **MASTER CONTROLS/Run Archive Process Now** to tidy up the entire workbook.

Helpful Reminder: If you plan to harvest tax losses, make sure that you TURN OFF all AUTOMATIC INVESTMENT PROGRAMS (DRIP, dividend reinvestment programs), etc. If you leave these auto-trade features on, you may inadvertently re-enter securities before the wash sale window period is over, thuse defeating the purpose of tax loss harvesting. Make sure you **turn off all these auto-investment features across ALL ACCOUNTS** (**QUALIFIED** as well as **TAXABLE**).

Troubleshooting Guide: What to Do When Things Go Wrong

Scenario A: Data Entry Mishaps

If you accidentally enter a trade on the wrong line, paste a block of data into the incorrect tab, or realize your ticker entry is just plain wrong, don't worry. You have two primary "safety nets":

- **The Quick Fix:** Immediately press **Ctrl + Z** (or **Cmd + Z** on Mac). This is the universal "Undo" command and will reverse your last several actions.
- **The Surgical Fix:** If you realize the mistake too late for an "Undo," simply click on the row that contains the error and use the 🛠️ **MASTER CONTROLS** > 🧹 **Delete Selected Row(s)** menu. This will physically remove the bad data and keep your sheet clean.

Scenario B: When Macros "Freeze" or Get Stuck

Google Apps Script (the "engine" under the hood) occasionally hits a snag due to a weak internet connection or a temporary Google server hiccup. If a menu command seems stuck or nothing happens when you click it:

1. **Refresh the Browser:** Before doing anything else, simply click the **Refresh** button on your web browser (or press **F5**). This re-establishes the connection and re-initializes the App Script menu.
2. **Wait for the "Finished Script" Toast:** Look at the top of the screen. If you see a small gray box that says "Running script," wait for it to disappear. If it stays there for more than 30 seconds, refresh the page.
3. **Check Permissions:** If it's your first time running a command, look for a popup asking for "Authorization." The script cannot run until you've granted it permission to edit the sheet.

Note on Restarting: You almost **never** need to restart your computer for a Google Sheets issue. Closing the browser tab and reopening it is the most extreme step usually required.

Resurrecting an Older Version (The Time Machine)

If you've made a major mess and can't remember what the sheet looked like before, you can "time travel" using Google's **Version History**. This is the ultimate "get out of jail free" card.

1. Go to the top menu and select **File > Version History > See version history**.
2. A panel will open on the right showing a list of every time the sheet was edited.
3. Click through the dates and times to see a preview of what the app looked like at that moment.
4. Once you find the version before the error happened, click the big green **Restore this version** button at the top.

This will instantly reset your **Wash Sale Guard** app to that exact moment in time, undoing any mistakes, formatting errors, or script-related glitches.

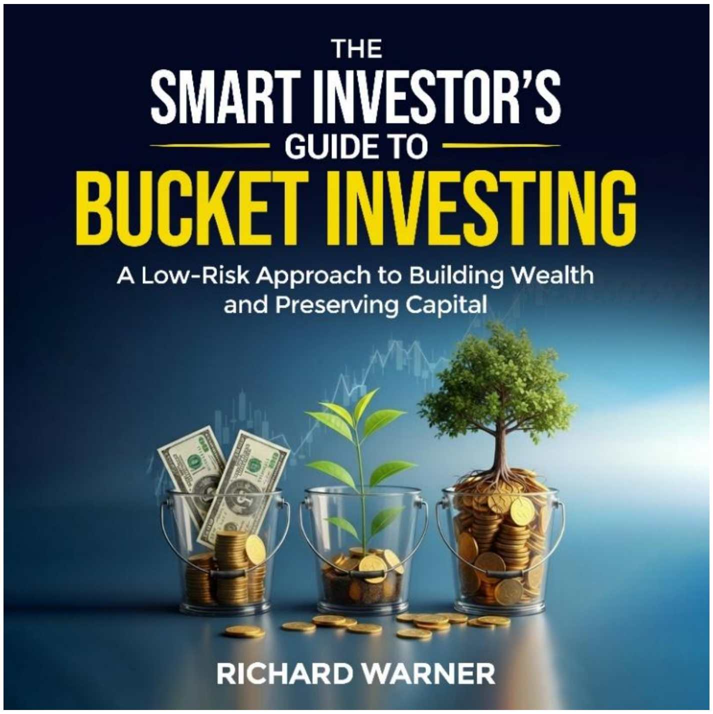
Pro-Tip for Newbies

If the app feels "laggy," it is usually because too many browser tabs are open or your computer is running low on memory. Closing unnecessary tabs or restarting just your web browser (Chrome, Edge, or Safari) will usually bring the app's performance back to full speed.

Resources & Next Steps

- **Get the Book:** ***The Smart Investor's Guide to Bucket Investing*** (Available on Amazon in eBook, Paperback, and AudioBook formats).
- **Join the Community:** Sign up at SmartInvestorModels.com for tips and updates.
- **Watch educational videos on the SmartInvestorModels YouTube channel.**

I hope you enjoyed reading this excerpt from Rich Warner's book *The Smart Investor's Guide to Bucket Investing: A Low-Risk Approach to Building Wealth and Preserving Capital*. If you found value in reading this PDF, consider purchasing the book in its entirety.



The book is available in eBook, paperback, and audiobook format on Amazon by ***clicking on this link.***

If you should purchase a copy of the book, would you kindly leave a short review on the platform where you purchased this book? Even a few words can make a big difference in helping others discover it.

Getting your feedback is incredibly valuable. Your feedback helps me improve and create more resources you'll love. It'll help me make additions and revisions and help spread the word to other investors. If you have a moment, I would be so grateful if you could share your thoughts.

With gratitude,

Rich Warner

For case studies, books, PDFs, videos, and other educational materials from Rich Warner, please visit the SmartInvestormodels.com website, the YouTube channel, or the digital platform where you purchased this product.