

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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## Quick Fix

### *Policing Your Credit Score*

■ **The Problem:** That zero-percent credit-card deal you snapped up caused your credit score to drop.

■ **The Solution:** Credit-card companies are increasingly throwing freebies and perks at potential customers to get their business, and plenty are biting. But sometimes there's a cost to these deals: The formulas used to figure credit scores depend



on myriad factors, from how many accounts you've openly recently to the type of account opened. But each new card could potentially lower your score

by as much as 12 points, says Stephen Snyder, an author and credit expert. That could mean you don't get access to the cheapest loans.

The way to keep your score high is to take out new credit only when you need it, and, of course, to pay bills on time and keep your balances low. If you do wind up with dormant credit accounts, don't close them. That will never improve your score and could lower it—it can make you appear closer to maxing out your available credit.

—Michelle Higgins