

How healthy are your books? A 5-minute self-check

Fifteen yes-or-no questions on the things that most often go wrong in small-business books. You don't need to be an accountant. Most answers are on one screen in your accounting software. Your answers stay with you; there's nothing to send.

1. Answer each question

Tick Yes, Partly / not sure, or No. If a question doesn't apply to you, tick Yes.

2. Add up your score

Yes = 2 points. Partly / not sure = 1. No = 0. Maximum 30.

3. Read your result

See what your score means and the next step on page 2.

A. BANK, CASH AND PAYMENTS

#	QUESTION	YES	PARTLY	NO
1	Is every bank and credit card account reconciled to its statement up to last month-end? Compare the statement balance with the balance in your software for each account.	☐	☐	☐
2	Are there no bank feed items waiting to be matched for more than 30 days? Look at the oldest unmatched line in your bank feed or reconcile screen.	☐	☐	☐
3	Is your undeposited funds or clearing account close to zero? It should hold only the last few days of receipts, not months of old payments.	☐	☐	☐
4	If you're paid through Stripe, PayPal or Shopify, are sales recorded at full value with fees shown separately? Recording only the net payout understates both sales and fees.	☐	☐	☐
5	Are there no uncleared payments or cheques older than 90 days? Old items on a reconciliation are often duplicates or payments that never went out.	☐	☐	☐

B. WHAT YOU OWE AND WHAT YOU'RE OWED

#	QUESTION	YES	PARTLY	NO
6	Is your balance sheet free of odd negative balances? For example a negative credit card, negative wages payable, or a negative bank account you don't recognise.	☐	☐	☐
7	Are bills older than 90 days in your payables list genuinely still unpaid? A common error: the bill was paid by card, but the bill itself was never marked paid.	☐	☐	☐
8	Are customer invoices older than 120 days being chased, or written off? Old invoices that will never be paid make your profit and cash look better than they are.	☐	☐	☐
9	Do wage and payroll tax accounts clear to zero after each payment? For example PAYE and KiwiSaver in New Zealand, or payroll taxes in the US.	☐	☐	☐
10	Does the GST or sales tax balance in your books match your last return? A difference usually means tax was coded to the wrong account, or a return was adjusted outside the books.	☐	☐	☐

C. PROFIT AND CLOSING DISCIPLINE

#	QUESTION	YES	PARTLY	NO
11	Are "Uncategorised", "Ask my accountant" or suspense accounts at zero? Anything sitting there hasn't been coded, so your profit by category isn't reliable.	☐	☐	☐
12	Is personal spending through the business recorded as drawings or a shareholder account, not as expenses? Mixing personal and business costs is one of the first things a tax authority or lender checks.	☐	☐	☐
13	Are larger equipment and software purchases recorded as assets, not expenses? Anything above your local threshold for writing off small assets should be depreciated.	☐	☐	☐
14	Are annual costs spread across the year, and loan repayments split between principal and interest? For example, an annual insurance premium shouldn't hit one month's profit in full.	☐	☐	☐
15	Is a lock date set on past periods, and do last year's closing figures still match what your accountant filed? Without a lock date, a change to an old transaction can quietly alter filed numbers.	☐	☐	☐

YOUR SCORE

____ / 30

Yes = 2 · Partly = 1 · No = 0

26 – 30

In good shape

Your books are largely reliable. A regular monthly close keeps them that way, so year-end is a formality.

18 – 25

At risk

The basics are there, but gaps are building up. Fix them before your next GST return or year-end, or expect surprises and a bigger bill from your accountant.

0 – 17

Needs attention

Your numbers probably can't be relied on for decisions yet. A one-off catch-up usually comes first, then a monthly routine to keep things clean.

Want a second pair of eyes? Get a free 24-hour Book Health Audit.

We sign an NDA first and look at your file with read-only access. Within 24 hours you get a written scorecard and a 20-minute call. No obligation to engage us.

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This self-check is a general guide, not accounting or tax advice. BridgeBooks provides bookkeeping and month-end close services and does not provide audit, assurance or tax filing services.