Can You Have Two of the Same Credit Card?

It's possible, but rare, to have multiples of the same card.

By Kimberly Rotter

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Having two of the same credit card could help you maximize specific perks you may be looking for, but issuers are not always keen on approving this. (Getty Images)

Under most circumstances, credit card issuers will not approve a new credit card account if you already have one for the same card. However, they make exceptions. Here's a look at when having two of the same card makes sense – and why it's so rare.

[Read: Best Rewards Credit Cards.](https://creditcards.usnews.com/rewards)

**Why Have Two of the Same Credit Card?**

Maximizing certain perks is a key reason for trying to apply for several of the same card. For example, the Alaska Airlines Visa Signature credit card ([https://creditcards.usnews.com/bank-of-america/alaska-airlines-visa-signature-credit-card](https://creditcards.usnews.com/bank-of-america/alaska-airlines-visa-signature-credit-card)) lets its cardholders earn a companion fare every year. In the past, some sought multiples of that card to earn more annual companion fare certificates, says S. Gideon Sandford, author of "The Free-quent Flyer's Manifesto," who writes about travel rewards programs.

The issuer stopped approving people for additional Alaska Airlines personal credit cards if they already had one or more open. "But you can still have a personal card and a business card and get two annual certificates," Sandford says.

It could also increase your potential to earn ongoing rewards, particularly if the card has a rewards cap. Hilary Stockton, CEO of luxury travel company TravelSort, says she and her spouse
carry doubles of two cards that each have a $1,500 cap on quarterly bonus rewards for that reason.

**Card Issuers Don't Encourage Identical Accounts**

That said, card issuers aren't clamoring for their cardholders to apply for multiple identical accounts or to hold two or more of the same card product.

David Robertson, publisher of The Nilson Report, which analyzes and reports on the global card and mobile payment industries, says that historically, allowing a consumer to own multiple identical credit card products may have increased the issuer's exposure to risk.

"If you have a line of credit tied to one card and a separate line of credit tied to a second card, it's easier for the consumer to run up two accounts if he or she runs into financial problems down the road," he says. "Multiple accounts may make it harder to spot that person who might be going toward a problem status."

However, since limiting risk and monitoring credit has become easier for issuers over time, Robertson suspects that the primary reason banks shy away from allowing multiple identical card products now is to limit financial exposure from offering rewards.

Some issuers explicitly ban having two of the same card, while others just discourage the practice.

[Read: Best 5% Cash Back Cards.](https://creditcards.usnews.com/best-percent-cash-back-cards)

**How Consumers Can Get Two of the Same Credit Card**
You don't have to be a credit card hacker to have multiple identical credit card accounts. Here are the most common scenarios in which a person might end up with two of the same credit card product:

- **Business use** ([https://creditcards.usnews.com/business](https://creditcards.usnews.com/business)). If you own multiple businesses, you might apply for the same credit card for each.

- **As an authorized user.** If you are the primary account holder on one account and an authorized user ([https://creditcards.usnews.com/articles/the-pros-and-cons-of-adding-an-authorized-user-to-your-credit-card](https://creditcards.usnews.com/articles/the-pros-and-cons-of-adding-an-authorized-user-to-your-credit-card)) on another account, you could end up with two of the same credit card in your wallet, both bearing your name.

- **Similar products.** You can carry two similar, but not identical, cards. The Citi Rewards+ Card ([https://creditcards.usnews.com/citi/citi-rewards-card](https://creditcards.usnews.com/citi/citi-rewards-card)) and the Citi Rewards+ Student Card ([https://creditcards.usnews.com/citi/citi-rewards-student-card](https://creditcards.usnews.com/citi/citi-rewards-student-card)) offer similar rewards programs with no annual fee. Likewise, business and consumer versions of the same credit card are distinct products but may offer some of the same features.

- **Product change.** If you decide that you don't want to keep a card that has an annual fee ([https://creditcards.usnews.com/articles/credit-card-perks-that-are-worth-the-annual-fee](https://creditcards.usnews.com/articles/credit-card-perks-that-are-worth-the-annual-fee)) and you call to close the account, the representative might suggest converting the account to a product without an annual fee. If you already own the annual fee-free version, you could end up with a second.

**Earning Multiple Sign-Up Bonuses**

Some consumers may want to sign up for a card they've held in the past to earn another lucrative sign-up bonus ([https://creditcards.usnews.com/signup-bonus](https://creditcards.usnews.com/signup-bonus)). But again,
issuers aren't eager to let cardholders double dip on past sign-up bonuses.

"From the issuer's standpoint, you don't want anyone running up the score when it comes to rewards," says Robertson.

American Express does not extend welcome offers to applicants who have ever had the same card in the past. Furthermore, when evaluating your eligibility for a welcome offer, it may also take into consideration the number of American Express cards you've opened and closed, along with other factors.

Chase and Citi say you can't earn a sign-up bonus if you received one for the same card in the past 24 months.

If you want to enjoy a sign-up bonus more than once, read the card's terms and conditions before you apply.

[Read: Best Grocery Credit Cards.](https://creditcards.usnews.com/best-grocery-cards)

**What to Remember Before Carrying Two of the Same Credit Card**

The lure of bonuses and rewards can be strong, but carrying two of the same card can come with risks. Keep these warnings in mind before you apply for an identical card.

**Multiple accounts are harder to manage.** Whether it's the same card or not, a new card is another account to manage. You might fall into debt more easily if small balances are spread out across multiple cards, making the total seem smaller than it is. You'll also need to manage multiple payment due dates or risk incurring late fees and damage to your [credit score](https://creditcards.usnews.com/articles/fastest-ways-to-improve-your-credit-score). And it can be especially confusing
with identical cards. You may note you've made a payment on one and think you've covered both, which could lead to a missed payment on the other.

**Your credit score could drop as the result of multiple credit card applications.** Each application is likely to result in an inquiry into your credit, and each hard inquiry ([https://creditcards.usnews.com/articles/difference-between-hard-and-soft-credit-inquiries](https://creditcards.usnews.com/articles/difference-between-hard-and-soft-credit-inquiries)) has the potential to cause your score to dip slightly. Even if the same creditor is pulling your credit, it counts as a new inquiry. It's usually a temporary drop of about five points. But some creditors may reject your application if your [credit report](https://creditcards.usnews.com/articles/how-to-get-your-free-annual-credit-reports) shows too many recent inquiries.

**Issuers won't make it easy.** Having two of the same credit card is generally discouraged by issuers. If you're planning to try to get two of the same card, you're going to have to read the fine print and may face limitations, especially if you're planning on earning sign-up bonuses for both.

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