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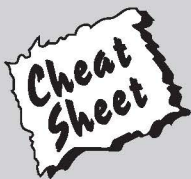
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Stephen L. Nelson

*Author of all previous editions of
Quicken For Dummies®*



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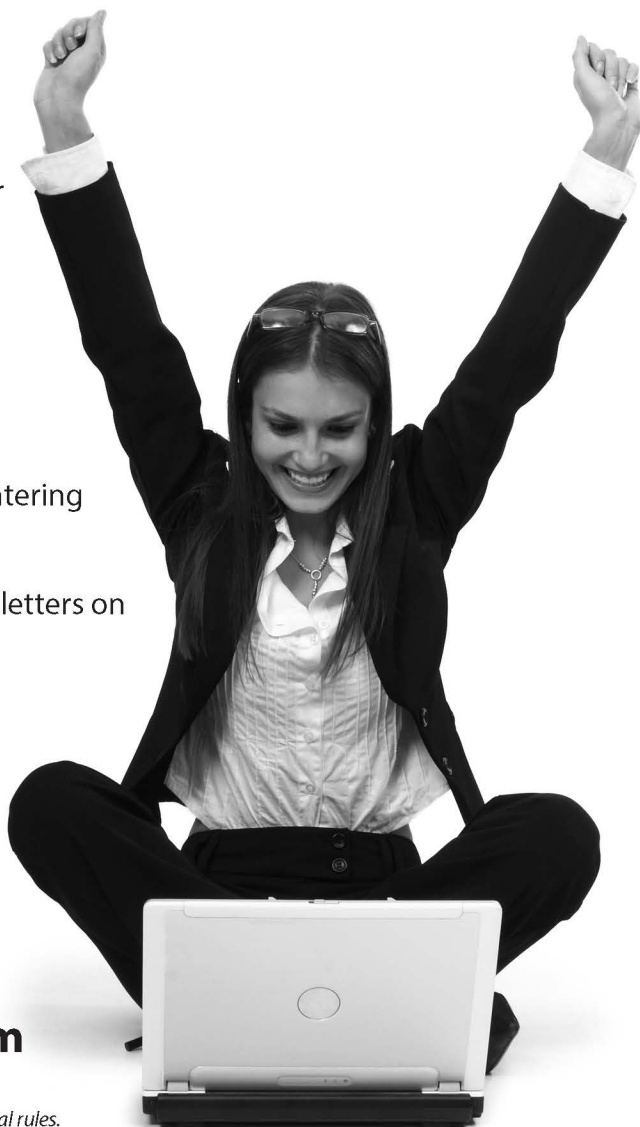
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by Stephen L. Nelson, MBA, CPA



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Introduction

You aren't a dummy, of course. But here's the deal: You don't have to be some sort of technogeek or financial wizard to manage your financial affairs on a PC. You have other things to do, places to go, and people to meet. And that's where *Quicken 2015 For Dummies* comes in.

In the pages that follow, I give you the straight scoop on how to use Quicken 2015 for Windows, without a lot of extra baggage, goofy tangential information, or misguided advice.

About This Book

This book isn't meant to be read from cover to cover like some Scandinavian crime thriller page-turner. Rather, it's organized into tiny, no-sweat descriptions of how to do the things you need to do. If you're the sort of person who just doesn't feel right *not* reading a book from cover to cover, you can, of course, go ahead and read this thing from front to back.

I can recommend this approach, however, only for people who have already checked the TV listings. There may, after all, be a *Grimm* rerun on.

To make the best use of your time and energy, you should know about the following conventions I use in this book.

When I want you to type something, such as **Hydraulics screamed as the pilot lowered his landing gear**, I put it in bold letters.

By the way, with Quicken, you don't have to worry about the case of the stuff you type (except for passwords, which are case sensitive). If I tell you to type **Hillary**, you can type **HILLARY**. Or you can follow e. e. cummings's lead and type **hillary**.

Whenever I describe a message or information that you see on the screen, I present it as follows:

Surprise! This is a message onscreen.

Sometimes I provide step-by-step descriptions of tasks. I feel very bad that I have to do this. So to make things easier for you, I highlight the tasks with bold text. That way, you'll know exactly what you're supposed to do. I also often provide a more detailed explanation in regular text. You can skip the regular text that accompanies the step-by-step descriptions if you already understand the process.

Here's an example that shows what I mean:

1. Press Enter.

Find the key that's labeled Enter. Extend your index finger so that it rests ever so gently on the Enter key. In one sure, fluid motion, press the Enter key by using your index finger. Then release the key.

Okay, that's kind of an extreme example. I never go into that much detail. But you get the idea. If you know how to press Enter, you can just do that and not read further. If you need help — say, with the finger depression part or something — just read the nitty-gritty details.

Can you skip anything else? Let me see now. . . . You can skip the paragraphs with the Technical Stuff icons next to them. See the “Special Icons” section, later in this Introduction, for an example of the Technical Stuff icon. The information I stick in those paragraphs is really only for those of you who like that technical kind of stuff.

But a warning: Don't skip the Warnings. They're the text flagged with the picture of the 19th-century bomb. They describe some things you really shouldn't do.

Out of respect for you, I'm not going to put such stuff in these paragraphs as “Don't smoke.” I figure that you're an adult. You can make your own lifestyle decisions.

So I'll reserve the Warnings for more urgent and immediate dangers — things akin to “Don't smoke while you're filling your car with gasoline.”

Three Foolish Assumptions

I assume just three things:

- ✔ You have a PC with Microsoft Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7, or Windows 8.
- ✔ You know how to turn it on.
- ✔ You want to use some flavor of Quicken 2015.

Oh, wait, I'm going to assume one more (fourth) thing: You own or somehow have access to a copy of Quicken.

You may be interested to know that Quicken comes in several versions. It doesn't really matter which one of the several versions you have. Each version works basically the same way, and this book applies to them all. But because each version has a few unique features, you may find that your screen doesn't look exactly like the screens shown in this book. You may, for example, have a few buttons that you don't see in the figures I show you. Don't worry if this happens. It probably means that you're working with a different version than I am.

Just to let you know, I used the super-duper, includes-everything version to write this book. You can tell this because the menu bar, which appears in some of the figures, sometimes shows both a Rental Property menu and a Business menu. If you have a different version, your menu bar will not show these menus. Your title bar (if you compare) will also show a different name.

The upshot here? Don't freak out if your version of Quicken 2015 looks a wee bit different from the figures shown in this book.

Beyond the Book

This book is packed with information about using and benefiting from Quicken. But you'll be glad to learn, I'm sure, that you can find additional relevant content at the www.dummies.com website:

✔ **Cheat Sheet:** (www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/quicken2015) supplies a handy reference that you'll use over and over, or refer to when you don't have the book handy.

✔ **Online articles covering additional topics at**

www.dummies.com/extras/quicken2015

Here, you'll find some tangential articles about simplifying your personal financial management and making stuff like your taxes and investing easier.

✔ **Updates to this book, if any, are at**

www.dummies.com/extras/quicken2015

Special Icons

Like many computer books, this book uses *icons*, or little pictures, to flag things that don't quite fit into the flow of things. *For Dummies* books use a standard set of icons that flag little digressions, such as the following:



This icon points out nerdy technical material that you may want to skip (or read, if you're feeling particularly bright).



Here's a shortcut to make your life easier.



This icon is just a friendly reminder to do something.



And this icon is a friendly reminder *not* to do something . . . or else.

Where to Next?

If you're just getting started, flip the page and start reading the first chapter.

If you have a special problem or question, use the Table of Contents or the Index to find out where that topic is covered and then turn to that page.

Part I

Zen, Quicken, and the Big Picture



Get more information on the new Quicken 2015 mobile device app in "Using the Quicken 2015 mobile device app" at www.dummies.com/extras/quicken2015.

In this part . . .

- ✔ Set up the Quicken software quickly and correctly so you start off right and immediately enjoy all the benefits.
- ✔ Get a bird's-eye overview of how you'll turn Quicken into a powerful personal financial-management tool to create a road map for success.
- ✔ Maximize your income, your savings, and your net worth by tapping easy-to-use budgeting tools and techniques.

Chapter 1

Setting Up Shop

In This Chapter

- ▶ Installing and setting up Quicken
 - ▶ Setting up your bank (or other) accounts if you're a first-time user
 - ▶ Providing a Quicken overview
 - ▶ Solving setup problems
-

If you've never used Quicken, begin here. This chapter tells you how to install Quicken (if you haven't already) and how to start the program for the first time. You also find out how you go about setting up Quicken accounts to track banking activities — specifically, the money that goes into and out of a checking or savings account.

If you've already begun to use Quicken, don't waste any time reading this chapter unless you want the review. You already know the stuff it covers.

By the way, if you have Windows, I assume that you know a little bit about it. No, you don't have to be some sort of expert. Shoot, you don't even have to be all that proficient. You do need to know how to start Windows applications (such as Quicken). It also helps immensely if you know how to choose commands on menus and how to enter stuff in windows and dialog boxes. If you don't know how to do these kinds of things, flip to Appendix A. It provides a quick-and-dirty overview of how you work in Windows. Read the stuff in the appendix, or at least skim it, and then come back to this chapter.



When I say Windows, I mean a recent version of Windows — something Microsoft is either currently selling or has sold in the last few years. Quicken 2015 won't run on Windows versions earlier than Windows Vista (with Service Pack 2) so if you want to run the latest version and you're still white-knuckling with Windows XP, I'm afraid it's time to upgrade. By the way, I used Windows 8.1 on the computer I used to write this book.

Installing and Starting Quicken

You install Quicken the same way that you install any program in Windows. If you already know how to install programs, you don't need any help from me. Stop reading here; do the installation thing; start your newly installed Quicken program; and then start reading the next section, "Finishing Setup If You've Used Quicken Before."

If you need help installing Quicken, here are the step-by-step instructions. Installing Quicken from a CD is easy:

1. Insert the CD into the CD-ROM drive.

In a short amount of time, Quicken should display the Quicken 2015 Install wizard window. I'm not going to show this window in a figure. There's really nothing in the window to talk about. The window just reads `Welcome to Quicken 2015!`

Note: I should make a clarification here, I realize. If you're installing Quicken for the first time, there's really nothing in the welcome window to talk about. However, if you're *upgrading* to Quicken 2015 from an earlier version of Quicken, the Install wizard gets all chatty. For example, the Install wizard tells you that Quicken really cares about you and will automatically back up your existing data file. The wizard tells you it will not only install the new version of Quicken, but also uninstall the old version. Finally, the wizard tells you it'll convert your "old version of Quicken" data to a format that works with Quicken 2015.

2. Click Next.

Quicken then displays a window that asks you a couple of questions:

- Whether you accept the Quicken license agreement
- Whether you're okay with having Quicken send anonymous usage statistics to Intuit

You can answer the Install wizard's questions by selecting the check boxes in front of the questions.

3. Click Let's Go.

Quicken displays the license agreement, which you should read, of course. But note that the license agreement window includes a couple of check boxes: one you check to indicate you agree to the license agreement, and one you check to indicate you and Quicken are "good" even if Quicken sends information about how you're using the program to the folks at Intuit.

4. Click Next.

Quicken displays the next window of the Install wizard, which tells you things are about to start happening but which also, as a subtle aside,

asks where you want to install Quicken. You should accept the program's suggestion: a Quicken subfolder in your Program Files folder.

Note: If you do want to change the location Quicken uses to store your data, you click the installation location hyperlink (shown in the lower-left corner of the window), click the Change Install Location button when Quicken displays the next window, and then use the dialog box that Quicken displays next to choose a drive and folder for the file.

5. Click Next.

Quicken displays yet another window of the Install wizard, indicating that the wizard needs to install the Quicken software and may need to update the software, too. Assuming you're okay with all this — and you should be — click the Install button.

Quicken installs itself. This process takes a few minutes. Along the way, you may see other screenfuls of messages, including marketing information about the features new to Quicken and some progress reports on the installation itself.

After the installation is complete, Quicken displays an installation complete message.

6. Click Finish.

Congratulations. You're nearly done. You'll need to restart your computer, so verify that the Reboot Now box is checked inside the dialog box that displays the installation complete message. Then click Finish.



You can purchase Quicken from the www.quicken.intuit.com website. And if you do so, you don't grab the installation program files from a CD but rather you grab them from the Intuit website. If you're taking this approach, visit the website, click the Buy Now button, and then follow the onscreen instructions to download the installation program files.

Finishing Setup If You've Used Quicken Before

If you've used a previous version of Quicken, the Quicken program displays a window that asks about converting your old Quicken data file to the next Quicken 2015 file format. If you're okay with this — and you should be; Quicken saves a copy of the old file — click the Convert File button. Quicken then converts the file.



The Quicken setup process can usually tell whether you've used Quicken before. The setup process knows where the Quicken installation program usually puts the Quicken program and data files, and the installation program will

look there. If you've used Quicken before but Quicken can't see this, two possibilities exist:

- ✓ You may have put the Quicken data file someplace weird. (If that's the case, with any luck, you remember the weird place where you hid the Quicken data file. But if not, see the section "The mysterious case of the missing Quicken data files" at the end of this chapter.)
- ✓ Maybe you didn't do anything with the Quicken data file, but the data file has somehow gone missing. (If that's the case, I hope you backed up the Quicken data file to a CD or to some other disc from which you can restore the data file.)

Finishing Setup If You've Not Used Quicken Before

To finish the setup when you've not used Quicken before, the program displays a friendly welcome message (not shown here), which asks you to indicate whether you're a new Quicken user, want to start over from scratch as though you're a new user, or have used Quicken before and need to open a file from a previous version of Quicken.

You indicate your Quicken status by selecting the appropriate option button and then clicking the big blue Get Started button. What happens next depends on which button you click.

Already a Quicken user?

If you've used Quicken before and select the I've Used Quicken Before option, Quicken then displays another Get Started With Quicken 2015 window, which asks whether you want to open a Quicken file located on this computer, restore a Quicken data file you've backed up to CD or disc, or start over and create a new data file.

If you indicate that you want to open another Quicken data file located on the computer, Quicken displays a dialog box that asks where that file is. If you indicate that you want to grab a backup copy of the Quicken file, Quicken displays a dialog box that asks where that file is. Presumably, if either of these situations is your case, you'll know where the data file or backup copy of the data file is.

Are you new to Quicken?

If you indicate that you're a new Quicken user, Quicken automatically sets up a data file for you. (You don't need to worry about it.)

Registering Quicken

Quicken prompts you to register the first time you start the program. (You might as well do this. The registration takes only a few minutes. All you do, in a nutshell, is provide your name and address, a bit of information about how you use Quicken, and your e-mail address.)

Note: You will also be prompted to set up an Intuit ID when you register unless you've already created an Intuit ID for use with another Intuit product, such as Quicken.com or TurboTax.

After you register, Quicken displays the Add Account dialog box. (See Figure 1-1.) The Add Account dialog box walks you through the steps for setting up the account (bank accounts, for example) that you'll manage using Quicken. (You can find out much more on this process in the next section.)

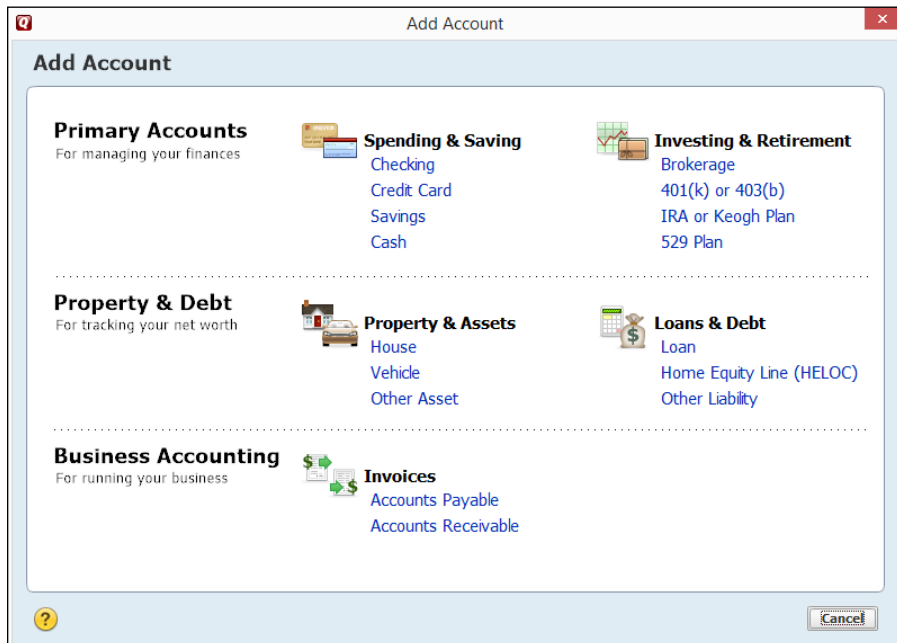


Figure 1-1:
The Quicken
Add
Account
dialog box.

Describing Your Banking

As mentioned in the preceding section, if you haven't used Quicken before or are starting from scratch, the first time you start Quicken 2015, the program shows the Add Account dialog box, which you use to tell Quicken about the accounts you'll track.

Click the Checking hyperlink (it appears at the top of the little list of accounts under the Spending & Saving heading) to provide information about your primary checking account and its current balance. Figure 1-2 shows the window that collects the first part of this information, but just so you don't get confused, here are the precise steps you take:

- 1. Identify the financial institution — usually a bank — by typing your institution's name in the text box provided.**

As you type, Quicken displays a list of financial institutions that match what you've typed so far. The more you type, the shorter the list of possible matching institutions. **Note:** When you start the Quicken program, it attempts to make an Internet connection so it can grab the most up-to-date version of this list of financial institutions.

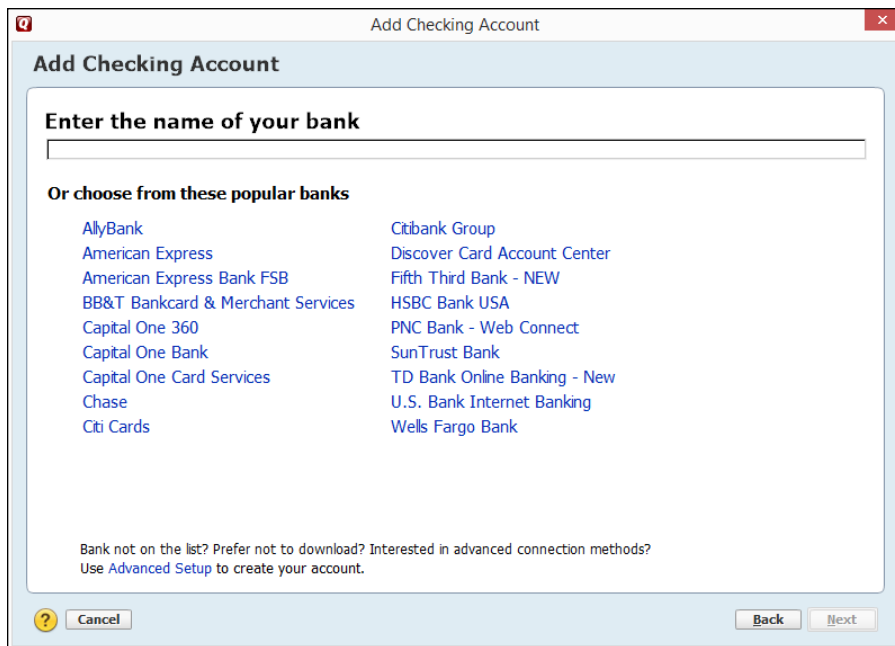


Figure 1-2:
The first Add
Checking
Account
window.

2. Tell Quicken whether you want to download transactions directly from your bank or enter transactions manually.

If your bank provides Internet access to your bank account — and most banks do — Quicken knows. And as a result, Quicken attempts to not so subtly push you into just grabbing data from the bank's website. I'm going to suggest, however, that you maintain your account manually. You have plenty of time later to find out how online banking works. (Online banking is really cool, though. See Chapter 6 for more information.)

That said, however, if you see your bank listed and you want to use online banking, select the bank and click Next. When you click the Next button, Quicken displays another version of the Add Your Primary Checking Account window, which asks for the username and password required to access your bank account electronically. To download transactions and account balance information directly from your bank's website, you need to provide this information. After you provide this information, click the Connect button to test the username and password information.

If you don't want to use online banking quite yet, and are happy to start slow and go manually at the beginning, click the Advanced Setup hyperlink at the bottom of the first Add Your Primary Checking Account window. Quicken won't quite believe you're bold enough to ignore its strong advice to go digital, so it displays another Add Your Primary Checking Account window that provides option buttons you can use to indicate that you want to be clever and just download transactions — or that you want to be ploddingly cautious (at least at the start) and enter transactions manually. By default, the I Want to Select the Connection Method option is selected. (See Figure 1-3.) But you don't want to be clever — or at least not quite yet — so select the I Want to Enter My Transactions Manually option.

Note: Quicken may not get into this online banking stuff if it can tell that your bank doesn't support online banking.

3. Tell Quicken the name you want to use for the checking account.

You do so by typing a name in the Account Name/Nickname text box, shown in Figure 1-4. Furthermore, if given the choice, click one of the option buttons that may appear below the Account Name/Nickname text box to indicate whether you're using the bank account primarily for business finances, personal finances, and so on. By the way, as far as the account name goes, you can be as general or as specific as you want. But brevity is a virtue here, so be concise: Quicken uses your account name to label stuff within the Quicken window and on Quicken reports. If you use a long account name, the name may not always fit on reports and screens.

Figure 1-3:
The second Add Checking Account window attempts to force you to do online banking.

Add Checking Account

I want to select the connection method used to download my transactions
Some banks offer enhanced Online Bill Pay and other services based on the connection method used to download your transactions. Choose this option if you are following specific instructions from your bank, or if you simply want to learn more. Note: Pre-registration for services and fees may be required.

Enter the name of your financial institution

I want to enter my transactions manually
Choose this option if your bank was not found in Simple Setup, or if you prefer to enter transactions into your Quicken registers by hand.

Figure 1-4:
The third Add Checking Account window.

Add Checking Account

Enter the name you'd like to use for this account in Quicken.
For example: "Family Checking" or "Mary's Household Account"

Account Name/Nickname

This account is used primarily for

Personal Transactions
 Business Transactions
 Rental Property Transactions

This determines the Tab that the account is placed in. You can change this from the Account List later if you wish.

4. Enter the ending bank statement date by referring to your bank statement.

After you provide Quicken a name and general description of the account's transactions, click Next, and Quicken displays another account setup dialog box (shown in Figure 1-5) that asks about the account's ending statement date and ending statement balance. Enter the date of your last bank statement in the Statement Ending Date text box. This date, by the way, is the date forward from which you will start using Quicken. Enter the date in *MM/DD/YYYY* or *MM/DD/YY* fashion.

"Geez, Steve," you're now saying to yourself, "what's *MM/DD/YYYY* fashion?" Okay. Here's an example: If your bank statement is dated August 30, 2015, type **8/30/2015**, or you can type **083015**.

5. Enter the ending bank statement balance by referring to your latest bank statement.

This balance is whatever appears on your bank statement. This balance is also the amount of money in your account on the date you begin your financial recordkeeping. If you have \$4.16 in your checking account, type **4.16** in the Statement Ending Balance text box.

The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Add Checking Account" with a close button in the top right corner. The main heading inside the dialog is "Add Checking Account". Below the heading is a light gray box containing the text: "Enter the ending date and balance from your latest statement" and "Don't worry if you don't have your last statement- you can make changes to your account later." Below this are two input fields. The first is labeled "Statement Ending Date" and contains the text "8/30/2015" with a calendar icon to its right. The second is labeled "Statement Ending Balance" and contains the text "4.16" with a currency icon to its right. To the right of the balance field is the text "This becomes the opening balance of your Quicken Account." At the bottom left of the dialog is a yellow question mark icon and a "Cancel" button. At the bottom right are "Back" and "Next" buttons.

Figure 1-5:
The fourth
Adding Your
Primary
Checking
Account
window.

6. **After you type the bank statement balance, click the Next button to continue moving through the account setup.**

Ultimately, you'll see an Account Added window that indicates you've successfully added your bank account. That window also provides a check box you can use to tell Quicken it should sync the account data you'll show for the just-added account with the Quicken Cloud so you can get balance data by using a mobile device like a smartphone. (Do check the box if you've got such a device.) The Account Added window also provides buttons you can click to add another bank account (including things like credit card accounts), as well as a button you can click to indicate that you're finished and just want to start using Quicken.

7. **If you have several other bank accounts that you want to set up within Quicken, repeat the preceding steps for each account.**

Just click the button that refers to adding another bank account.

Slogging Through More Setup Stuff

Okay, from my perspective, after you've described your bank account(s), you're ready to start using Quicken. With Quicken, the key thing you want to do is track your bank account(s) so you can monitor and measure your income and your outgo — and so you know how much money you have in an account.

The folks at Intuit, however, allow you to provide the Quicken program a lot more information about your financial affairs. Specifically, the Intuit gang lets you describe in detail your income sources and your regular expenditures.

After you finish adding your accounts, Quicken displays its home page (see Figure 1-6). To tell Quicken all about your income and outgo, you click the Get Started button in the Stay on Top of Monthly Bills area of the home page.

When you do, Quicken displays the first Stay on Top of Monthly Bills window, shown in Figure 1-7. To describe a recurring bill (such as your rent check, car loan payment, and so on), you click the Add a Bill button. Then, when Quicken displays the Add Bill Reminder dialog box (not shown here), you describe the bill in detail, including who gets paid, when they should be paid, why they're paid, and so forth. (I'm not going to describe the Add Bill Reminder dialog box here because I talk about it in detail in Chapter 12, when the subject of loan payments comes up.)