

Online banks

They offer certain advantages when compared to classic financial institutions. Online banks have one big drawback though: It is often not very easy to contact them.

Some tips for using online banks:

- Remember there may be some problems with online-only banks: They often only offer limited contact and support options.
- Only credit as much money to your online bank facility as you will need in the foreseeable future.
- Do not permanently store any other credit card details to fund your online bank account with your online bank. Once you have successfully added funds, make sure to remove your credit card again.
- Don't have an online bank as your only facility, but make sure to also keep an additional account which you can for instance use to pay at favourable terms when on holiday.
- Don't just rely on one payment facility when on holiday, but always keep a second option available – and this applies across the board, not just to online banks.
- Check online offers by Swiss financial institutions. They frequently offer better support and easier contact options than foreign online banks.
- Use your app's security settings – it is often possible to (temporarily) block certain transactions such as cash withdrawals, online transactions or contactless payments, thus increasing the level of your credit card protection. Activating and deactivating such blocks only takes a few clicks.
- If possible, use virtual disposable cards for your online shopping. These cards can only ever be used for exactly one purchase, since all card details are automatically regenerated, stopping fraudsters from using stolen credit card data.

Convenience for little money

They have smart names such as “Revolut”, “Neon” or “Zak” and promote their low fees and cutting-edge apps: So-called online, smartphone, neo or Internet banks are becoming ever more popular in Switzerland, too.

These are financial institutions which offer their products exclusively online. They don't have any branches and frequently no call centre either. Orders are generally only accepted online, usually via the respective provider apps. This saves on costs and enables them to offer favourable pricing structures, e.g. foreign currency exchange rates and low or no transaction costs. Traditional financial institutions just cannot compete with this.

In addition, such online banks often contrast favourably compared to classic financial institutions by offering better user convenience. Installing the app, opening an account, applying for cards and undertaking money transactions all become child's play. Some other useful benefits offered to customers are functions such as virtual credit cards or flexible payment options.

The price to pay for low bank charges

However, customers often have to pay for such convenience and comparably favourable conditions when they are then unable to contact anyone in a hurry if they have a problem or query. With foreign online banks in par-

ticular, this can cause considerable trouble.

Traditional financial institutions now increasingly offer similar online products, too, with the added benefit of better support. You should therefore also check out online banking facilities by Swiss banks.

Online banks don't have any branches, but offer their products exclusively via online channels. Orders are generally submitted via an app. Despite customer benefits such as cost savings and easy operation though, the downside is that it often proves difficult to contact these banks, or obtain any support.