

# Marriage

## **Marriage Creates a New Paper Trail**

Marriage changes numerous aspects of life, including your tax situation. As former single people, you must now file your taxes as married filing jointly or married filing separately, whichever works to your advantage taxwise. Check with your H&R Block tax professional for advice.

## **Your Marital Status and Roth IRAs**

If you lived apart from your spouse for an entire year, you are considered unmarried for purposes of making a Roth conversion.

## **Determining Who's Head of the Household**

If you lived with your spouse all year or any part of the last six months of the year, neither one of you will qualify for head of household status. If you didn't live together any of the last half of the year, the taxpayer who provided more than half the cost for keeping up the home for one or more children may file using the head of household status. It's possible for you both to qualify, but you would both have had to provide a household for separate children.

## **Married Couples Have Multiple Filing Options**

Married couples have three filing choices: married, filing jointly; married, filing separately; or even filing as unmarried. To file as unmarried, you must have lived apart from your spouse for the last six months of the year, have a dependent child living with you, and provide more than half of the support for the household.

## **Who Invited the Taxman to My Wedding?**

Uncle Sam thinks that two can live as cheaply as one, and therefore you may not need the extra income created by your happy union. If both of you have income, and your income is substantial, you may pay more tax than if you could file as singles. That's because the standard deduction for married taxpayers is not twice as large as the standard deduction for singles. Also, the tax rates jump into higher brackets for married couples at less than twice the income levels for singles. But enjoy your bliss anyway; you may pay more taxes but some studies show that married people live longer. And not every married couple pays the marriage penalty. In many cases, married couples pay less tax than they would if they were filing as singles.

## **The Taxing Side of Marriage**

If you plan to get married soon, compare the amount of tax you'll pay as two single taxpayers with the amount you would pay as a married couple. In some situations, the tax on a joint return is higher than it would be on two separate returns. The closer the spouses' incomes, the larger the marriage penalty. Your tax professional can help determine which is the best option for you.