



How To Find the Best Style ETFs

Finding the best ETFs is an increasingly difficult task in a world with so many to choose from. How can you pick with so many choices available?

Don't Trust ETF Labels

There are at least 71 different All Cap Blend ETFs and at least 294 ETFs across twelve styles. Do investors need 24+ choices on average per style? How different can the ETFs be?

Those 71 All Cap Blend ETFs are very different. With anywhere from 20 to 3691 holdings, many of these All Cap Blend ETFs have drastically different portfolios, creating drastically different investment implications.

The same is true for the ETFs in any other style, as each offers a very different mix of good and bad stocks. Large Cap Value ranks first for stock selection. Small Cap Value ranks last. Details on the [Best & Worst ETFs in each style are here.](#)

Paralysis By Analysis

We think the large number of All Cap Blend (or any other) style ETFs hurts investors more than it helps because too many options can be paralyzing. It is simply not possible for the majority of investors to properly assess the quality of so many ETFs. Analyzing ETFs, done with the proper diligence, is far more difficult than analyzing stocks because it means analyzing all the stocks within each ETF. As stated above, that can be as many as 3691 stocks, and sometimes even more, for one ETF.

Any investor focused on fulfilling fiduciary duties recognizes that analyzing the holdings of an ETF is critical to finding the best ETF. Figure 1 shows our top rated ETF for each style.

Figure 1: The Best ETF in Each Style

Ticker	Name	Investment Style	Assets (\$mm)
SPYB	SPDR S&P 500 Buyback ETF	All Cap Blend	\$9
QVM	Arrow QVM Equity Factor	All Cap Growth	\$4
VLU	SPDR S&P 1500 Value TILT	All Cap Value	\$4
DIA	SPDR Dow Jones Industrial Average	Large Cap Blend	\$12,461
WBIL	WBI Tactical LCS Shares	Large Cap Growth	\$86
RDVY	First Trust NASDAQ Rising Dividend Achievers	Large Cap Value	\$22
WBID	WBI Tactical SMS Shares	Mid Cap Blend	\$86
VALX	Validea Market Legends	Mid Cap Growth	\$22
QVAL	ValueShares U.S. Quantitative Value	Mid Cap Value	\$46
FDM	First Trust Dow Jones Select Micro Cap Index	Small Cap Blend	\$49
SLYG	SPDR S&P 600 Small Cap Growth	Small Cap Growth	\$658
XSLV	PowerShares S&P Small Cap Low Volatility	Small Cap Value	\$340

Sources: New Constructs, LLC and company filings

Amongst the ETFs in Figure 1, ValueShares U.S. Quantitative Value ETF (QVAL) ranks first overall, First Trust NASDAQ Rising Dividend Achievers (RDVY) ranks second, and SPDR S&P 500 Buyback ETF (SPYB) ranks third. SPDR S&P 600 Small Cap Growth (SLYG) ranks last.

How to Avoid "The Danger Within"

Why do you need to know the holdings of ETFs before you buy?

You need to be sure you do not buy an ETF that might blow up. Buying an ETF without analyzing its holdings is like buying a stock without analyzing its business and finances. No matter how cheap, if it holds bad stocks, the ETF's performance will be bad. Don't just take my word for it, see [what Barron's says](#) on this matter.

PERFORMANCE OF FUND'S HOLDINGS = PERFORMANCE OF FUND

If Only Investors Could Find Funds Rated by Their Holdings

Our [ETF ratings](#) leverage our [stock coverage](#). We rate ETFs based on the aggregated ratings of the stock each ETF holds.

ValueShares U.S. Quantitative Value ETF (QVAL) is the top-rated Mid Cap Value ETF and the overall best ETF of the 294 style ETFs that we cover.

The worst ETF in Figure 1 is SPDR S&P 600 Small Cap Growth (SLYG), which gets a Neutral rating. One would think ETF providers could do better for this style.

Disclosure: David Trainer and Kyle Guske II receive no compensation to write about any specific stock, style, or theme.

New Constructs® – Profile

How New Constructs Creates Value for Clients

We find it. You benefit. Cutting-edge technology enables us to scale our [forensic accounting expertise](#) across 3000+ stocks. We shine a light in the dark corners of SEC filings so our clients can make safer, more informed decisions.

Our [stock rating methodology](#) instantly informs you of the quality of the business and the fairness of the stock's valuation. We do the diligence on earnings quality and valuation so you don't have to.

In-depth risk/reward analysis underpins our ratings. Our rating methodology grades every stock, ETF, and mutual fund according to what we believe are the 5 most important criteria for assessing the quality of an equity. Each grade reflects the balance of potential risk and reward of buying that equity. Our analysis results in the 5 ratings described below. Very Attractive and Attractive correspond to a "Buy" rating, Very Dangerous and Dangerous correspond to a "Sell" rating, while Neutral corresponds to a "Hold" rating.

QUESTION: Why shouldn't fund research be as good as stock research? Why should fund investors rely on backward-looking price trends?

ANSWER: They should not.

Don't judge a fund by its cover. Take a look inside at its holdings and understand the quality of earnings and valuation of the stocks it holds. We enable you to choose the best fund based on its stock-picking merits so you do not have to rely solely on backward-looking technical metrics.

The drivers of our [forward-looking fund ratings](#) are Portfolio Management (i.e. the aggregated ratings of its holdings) and Total Annual Costs. The Total Annual Costs Rating ([details here](#)) captures the all-in cost of being in a fund over a 3-year holding period, the average period for all fund investors.

Our Philosophy About Research

Accounting data is not designed for equity investors, but for debt investors. [Accounting data must be translated into economic earnings](#) to understand the profitability and valuation relevant to equity investors. Respected investors (e.g. Adam Smith, Warren Buffett and Ben Graham) have repeatedly emphasized that accounting results should not be used to value stocks. [Economic earnings](#) are what matter because they are:

1. Based on the complete set of financial information available.
2. Standard for all companies.
3. A more accurate representation of the true underlying cash flows of the business.

Additional Information

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