The Cost of Market-Timing
The risk of missing the best days in the market, 2000-2019

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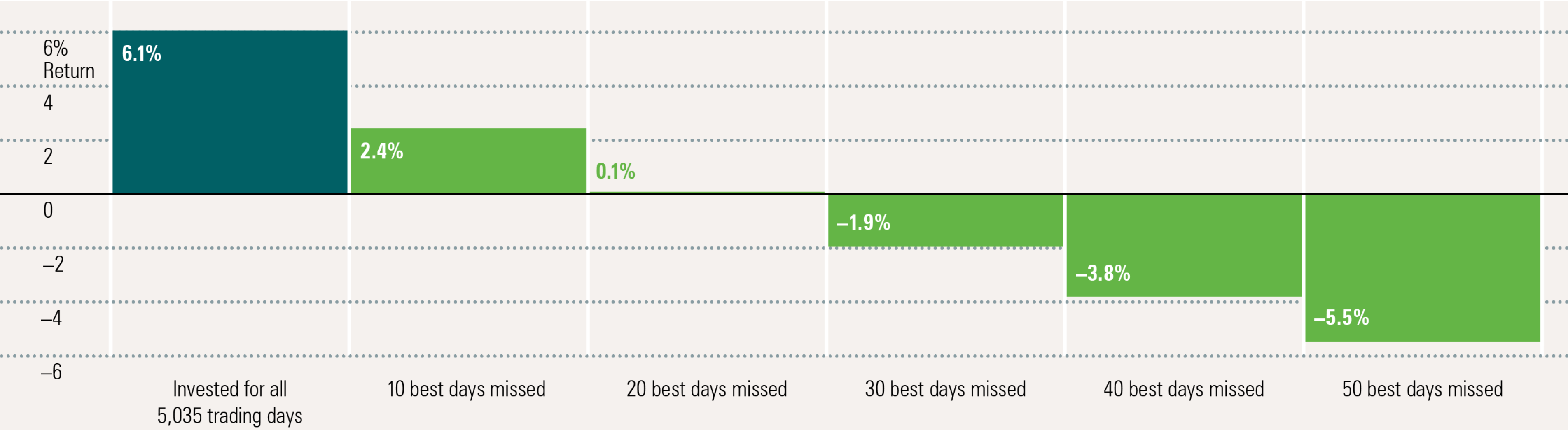
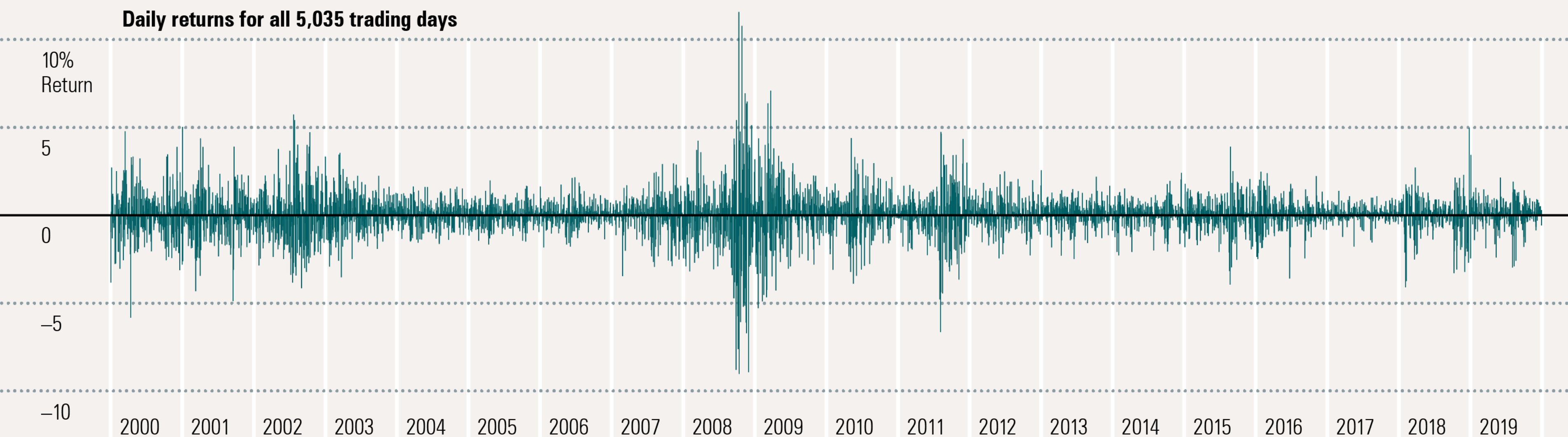


Daily returns for all 5,035 trading days



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The Cost of Market-Timing
Investors who attempt to time the market run the risk of missing periods of exceptional returns, leading to significant adverse effects on the ending value of a portfolio. This top graph illustrates the risk of attempting to time the stock market over the past 20 years by showing the returns investors would have achieved if they had missed some of the best days in the market. The bottom graph illustrates the daily returns for all 5,035 trading days.
Investors who stayed in the market for all 5,035 trading days achieved a compound annual return of 5.6%. However, that same investment would have returned 2.0% had it missed only the 10 best days of stock returns. Further, missing the 50 best days would have produced a loss of 5.9%. Although the market has exhibited tremendous volatility on a daily basis, over the long term, stock investors who stayed the course were rewarded accordingly.
The appeal of market-timing is obvious—improving portfolio returns by avoiding periods of poor performance. However, timing the market consistently is extremely difficult. And unsuccessful market-timing (the more likely result) can lead to a significant opportunity loss.
Returns and principal invested in stocks are not guaranteed, and stocks have been more volatile than other asset classes. Holding a portfolio of securities for the long term does not ensure a profitable outcome, and investing in securities always involves risk of loss.
About the data
Stocks in this example are represented by the Ibbotson® Large Company Stock Index. An investment cannot be made directly in an index. The data assumes reinvestment of income and does not account for taxes or transaction costs.

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