NEVER WORRY ABOUT VOLATILITY AGAIN

The 8 Proven Strategies To Protect Your Account And Your Options Selling Profits From Market Crashes And Volatility Spikes That Could Cost You Thousands



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“SAFE” Volatility Checklist

Simple Actions For Eluding Volatility

- ☐ Adjust Your Buying Power Usage Based On VIX
- ☐ Use A Bollinger Band To Avoid Market Crashes
- ☐ Implement Longer DTEs (90 - 365 DTE)
- ☐ Use High Probability Setups (5 - 20 Delta)
- ☐ Convert Undefined Trades Into Defined Trades
- ☐ Put On Volatility Hedges Once A Month
- ☐ Diversify Your Positions Based On VIX Correlation
- ☐ Implement Automated Risk Management

Why Does Volatility Matter?

Imagine you’re planning a family road trip.

The destination is a relaxing beach vacation, but the journey is filled with winding roads, sudden storms, and unexpected detours.

Even if you eventually reach the beach, the stress from the trip might leave you too exhausted to enjoy it.

This is what trading feels like for many options sellers when volatility strikes.

Volatility, in the simplest terms, is the measure of how much an asset's price fluctuates over a given period. For options sellers, volatility can be both friend and foe.

It presents opportunities to collect higher premiums, but it also brings the risk of sudden, unfavorable price swings that can derail even the most carefully planned strategies.

If you’ve ever watched your positions swing wildly from profit to loss in a matter of hours, you know this stress firsthand.

It’s not just about losing money—it’s about the emotional rollercoaster that comes with uncertainty.

And when you’re selling options to generate consistent monthly income, volatility can feel like that unexpected storm that turns a peaceful drive into a white-knuckle experience.

The Hidden Costs of Ignoring Volatility

Many traders focus solely on their probability of profit (POP) or the premiums they collect. While those metrics are important, ignoring volatility is like ignoring weather forecasts on that road trip. Sure, you might get lucky and avoid storms, but wouldn’t you rather plan ahead?

Ignoring volatility can lead to:

- **Sudden, large losses** when market sentiment shifts.
- **Margin calls** that force you to liquidate positions at the worst times.
- **Missed opportunities** to enter trades with better risk-reward profiles.
- **Increased stress and second-guessing** every decision you make.

For many people, it's not just the financial loss that hurts; it's the mental drain. One of my students, Jacob, a recent retiree, told me he used to check his trades ten times a day during volatile markets. It consumed his mornings, distracted him during family dinners, and even kept him up at night. Trading was supposed to fund his retirement lifestyle, not dominate it.

Why Volatility Should Be Your Top Priority

The goal of selling options isn't just to make money; it's to make money consistently while preserving peace of mind. To do that, you must understand how volatility affects your positions and what you can do to manage it.

When volatility increases:

- **Options premiums rise,** which is good for sellers—but only if you manage the increased risk.
- **Underlying assets become unpredictable,** making it harder to rely on probability alone.
- **Emotional decisions increase,** especially if you lack a plan.

But here's the truth:

Volatility isn't the enemy. Unmanaged volatility is.

Throughout this book, you'll learn proven strategies to prevent volatility from catching you off guard. You'll discover how to sell options confidently, sleep peacefully at night, and enjoy the freedom that consistent, stress-free trading can provide.

Because at the end of the day, what's the point of trading if it steals your peace of mind and glues you to the computer screen all day?

Let’s change that. Let’s make volatility something you never have to worry about again (aka the goal of this book).

How Is Volatility Measured?

Before you can manage volatility, you need to understand how it's measured. Volatility isn't just a buzzword - it's a quantifiable metric that traders use to gauge market sentiment, price fluctuations, and potential risk. In this chapter, we'll break down the key ways volatility is measured and how you can use these tools to make smarter trading decisions.

1. Historical Volatility (HV)

Historical Volatility measures the actual price fluctuations of an asset over a given period. It's calculated using past price data, typically over 10, 20, or 30 trading days.

How to Use It:

- Higher HV indicates more erratic price movements in the past.
- Lower HV suggests steadier price trends.
- Use HV to compare an asset's current volatility to its historical norms.

Example: If SPY's HV over the past month is 15% but typically hovers around 10%, the market has been more volatile than usual.

Why it matters: HV helps you identify if recent price swings are abnormal, allowing you to adjust your trading strategies accordingly.

2. Implied Volatility (IV)

Implied Volatility represents the market's expectation of future volatility, derived from options prices. Higher IV indicates that traders expect bigger price swings, while lower IV suggests calmer markets.

How to Use It:

- Use IV to assess the cost of options; higher IV means more expensive premiums.

- Compare an option's IV to its historical range (using IV Rank or IV Percentile).
- Sell options when IV is high (to collect richer premiums) and consider buying when IV is low.

Example: If SPY's IV is at 25% but usually ranges between 10-20%, premiums are inflated, making it an attractive environment for option sellers.

Why it matters: IV doesn't just reflect market conditions - it also influences your potential returns as an options seller.

3. The VIX: The Fear Index

The **VIX** (CBOE Volatility Index) measures expected 30-day volatility of the S&P 500 based on options prices. Often called the "fear index," the VIX spikes during market downturns and falls during stable periods.

How to Use It:

- A VIX reading below 15 typically indicates calm markets.
- VIX between 15-25 suggests moderate volatility.
- VIX above 25 signals heightened market fear and potential turbulence.

Example: During the 2020 market crash, the VIX surged above 80, reflecting extreme market uncertainty.

Why it matters: Monitoring the VIX helps you adjust your buying power and risk exposure. This will be discussed in more detail in the strategies chapter!

4. Bollinger Bands

Bollinger Bands measure volatility through price deviations from a moving average. They consist of a middle band (simple moving average) and two outer bands set at standard deviations. The best settings for the Bollinger Band is 200 for the moving average and a standard deviation of 2.

How to Use It:

- When price touches or moves outside the bands, volatility is elevated.
- Narrowing bands indicate low volatility and potential breakouts.
- Widening bands signal high volatility and possible price reversals.

Example: If SPY trades outside the upper band, consider waiting before placing new trades—it may be overextended.

Why it matters: Bollinger Bands help you avoid entering trades during volatile price extremes.

These are just some of the ways that you can measure volatility. The most common measurements for options sellers are the volatility index (VIX) and implied volatility (IV). I personally enjoy using the bollinger band indicator on the daily time frame in order to assess how likely a market crash is (aka how likely a surge in volatility is). Now that you know how to measure volatility, you need to know how volatility affects options prices.

How Does Volatility Affect Options Prices?

As an options seller, volatility plays a crucial role in determining how much premium you collect and how your positions perform. Understanding how volatility impacts options prices helps you make smarter decisions about when to sell, which strikes to choose, and how to manage risk.

In this chapter, we'll explore how different types of volatility affect options pricing—especially from the perspective of an options seller looking to maximize premium while controlling risk.

The Relationship Between Volatility and Option Premiums

Options prices are largely influenced by two types of volatility:

- **Historical Volatility (HV):** How much the underlying has fluctuated in the past.
- **Implied Volatility (IV):** The market's expectation of future volatility (derived from options prices).

For options sellers, **Implied Volatility** is the key driver of premium. When IV rises, option premiums increase. When IV falls, premiums shrink.

Why it matters: Higher IV means you get paid more when selling options, but you also face higher potential price swings in the underlying asset.

Ideal Scenario: Sell options when IV is elevated and expected to decrease (known as "volatility contraction"). This lets you collect a higher premium and profit as IV drops.

Risk Scenario: Selling during low IV environments offers less premium, leaving you vulnerable if volatility spikes afterward.

Vega: The Greek That Measures Volatility Impact

Vega measures how much an option's price changes with a 1% change in implied volatility.

Why options sellers should care:

- **Positive Vega (Long Options):** Gain value when volatility rises.
- **Negative Vega (Short Options):** Lose value when volatility rises.

Example: If you sell a call option with a Vega of 0.10, a 5% increase in IV adds approximately $0.50 to the option's value—working against you as a seller.

Tip: Sell options when Vega is high (during periods of elevated IV), allowing you to benefit from volatility contraction.

Volatility Skew and Its Effect on Options Sellers

Volatility skew refers to differences in implied volatility across strike prices and expiration dates.

Key Points:

- Out-of-the-money (OTM) puts often have higher IV than calls (put skew) because of demand for downside protection.
- Shorting OTM puts typically yields higher premiums but comes with tail risk. Options tail risk for puts refers to the potential for extreme, unexpected market drops that cause put option prices to spike, leading to significant losses for option sellers beyond what typical market movements would suggest.
- Calls may offer less premium but present lower downside exposure.

Practical Application: Use volatility skew to your advantage by selecting strikes that offer optimal risk-to-reward based on elevated premiums.

Volatility Crush: The Options Seller's Best Friend

A **volatility crush** occurs when IV drops sharply, often after major events like earnings announcements or economic data releases.

Why sellers love it:

- Options premiums deflate quickly.
- Positions can become profitable even if the underlying barely moves.

Example: Selling options before earnings can be lucrative if the stock trades within expectations. However, it's riskier due to potential post-announcement volatility.

Pro Tip: Target events where volatility is priced in but where you expect minimal price movement.

How Volatility Influences Strategy Selection

Different volatility environments call for different strategies:

High IV Environment:

- Sell strategies like strangles, straddles, and iron condors to capitalize on inflated premiums.
- Widen strike ranges to give yourself more room for price movement.

Low IV Environment:

- Focus on defined-risk trades like credit spreads to manage limited premium potential.
- Consider waiting for volatility to increase before entering new trades.

Bottom Line: Volatility should guide both when you trade and what strategies you use.

Volatility and Time Decay (Theta)

As an options seller, you benefit from **time decay (Theta)**, but high volatility can slow this decay.

Low Volatility: Theta works in your favor; options lose value consistently.
High Volatility: Premium remains elevated longer, delaying profit potential unless volatility contracts.

Strategy Tip: Sell options when volatility is high but expected to decline, so you can benefit from both time decay and volatility contraction.

Volatility And Futures Options Explained

When trading futures options, margin requirements are calculated using the Standard Portfolio Analysis of Risk (SPAN) system. Unlike traditional stock options, SPAN margin takes into account the entire portfolio's risk and adjusts based on factors like price movement, volatility, and market conditions. As volatility increases, SPAN margin requirements rise to account for the greater potential price swings and increased risk of large losses. This means that during periods of high implied volatility (IV), traders are required to allocate more capital to maintain positions, reducing available buying power. Conversely, when volatility subsides, margin requirements decrease, allowing for more efficient capital usage.

Why this matters for options sellers: Higher volatility can inflate premiums but also tie up more capital due to elevated margin requirements. Managing exposure during volatile markets is crucial to avoid margin calls and ensure sustainable trading.

Volatility is a double-edged sword for options sellers. It inflates premiums (good for you) but also signals greater risk (potentially bad if unmanaged). By understanding how volatility affects options prices, you can position yourself to collect higher premiums while avoiding common pitfalls.

Best practice: Sell options when IV is high and expected to drop.
Avoid: Selling in low IV environments unless you have a strong directional edge.
Always: Use defined-risk strategies during extreme volatility to protect your capital.

In the next chapter, we'll explore how to use these insights to choose the right trades for any market condition—and how automation can help you stay disciplined.

Volatility Prevention Strategies

Volatility is like the weather: unpredictable, sometimes dangerous, but manageable with the right preparation. Just as you'd pack an umbrella if the forecast calls for rain, options sellers should prepare for market volatility with a proven checklist. That's where the "**SAFE" Volatility Checklist** comes in. These eight practical strategies will help you manage risk, preserve capital, and maintain peace of mind while generating consistent income.

Before explaining the different strategies for volatility prevention, you need to make sure that you are not over trading or over sizing your trades. It is best practice to have no more than 50% of your account in trades. So people even find it best to have no more than 30% of their account. Before you start implementing these strategies, ensure that you are using proper position sizing as that will automatically help prevent a lot of unnecessary losses.

The more of these strategies that you implement, the less profit you will have due to the cost that comes with hedging. Therefore, be selective about which strategies you want to use. You can also use more or less strategies based on how risky the market is or how uneasy you feel about the market. I personally only use three of these strategies at once because I like being protected but still enjoy seeing a decent profit from my trade.

Each strategy will include the following items:

✅ **Strategy** - this will explain how to actually implement it

👉 **Why This Works** - a paragraph explaining why it works

📽️ **Video Training** - a 5-10 minute video explaining more in-depth

1. Adjust Your Buying Power Usage Based On VIX

The VIX, often called the "fear index," measures market volatility expectations. When the VIX is low, markets are stable; when it's high, turbulence is ahead.

✅ Strategy:

- **VIX below 15:** Use between 25% - 40% of your buying power.
- **VIX between 15-25:** Scale up to 40% - 50% of your buying power.
- **VIX above 25:** Scale up to 80% of your buying power
- This only applies for options sellers. If you are buying options, you would want to do the opposite of what's listed above (size up when VIX is low).

👉 Why This Works:

This tends to work well because you adjust your risk based on the risk in the market. When VIX is lower, you have a higher risk of VIX spiking resulting in large losses as an options seller. By being in fewer positions when VIX is lower, it leads to less losses if volatility spikes as well as gives you more capital to deploy when VIX is higher to capitalize on volatility contraction.

📽️ Video Training:

https://learn.optionsautotrader.com/volatility-book-trainings

2. Use A Bollinger Band To Avoid Market Crashes

Bollinger Bands measure market volatility and price extremes. When prices touch or move outside the upper and lower bands, it often signals a higher chance of a trend change.

✅ Strategy:

- Avoid entering new trades when the market is below the lower Bollinger Band and above the upper Bollinger Band on the daily chart.
- Use the bands to identify overextended moves and wait for prices to re-enter the range before initiating trades.

👉 Why This Works:

The market, although unpredictable, tends to follow basic math principles. Just like how if you stretch a rubber band too far, it snaps. The same thing happens to the stock market. If it stretches too high or low (as defined by math levels shown by the Bollinger Bands), it has a high chance of snapping back.

📽️ Video Training:

https://learn.optionsautotrader.com/volatility-book-trainings

3. Implement Longer DTEs (90 - 365 DTE)

Short-term trades may decay faster but are more sensitive to sudden volatility shifts. Longer Days To Expiration (DTE) options provide more stability and smoother price movements.

✅ Strategy:

- Aim for 90 - 365 DTE for your strategies (120 DTE is the sweet spot).
- Close or roll trades with less than 21 DTE to prevent gamma risk. Gamma risk is the chance that an option's price will change more quickly as the stock price moves, especially as the option gets closer to expiration or near the strike price, which can lead to sudden gains or losses.

👉 Why This Works:

The further out in time you go on your DTE, the more time you have to be right on the trade which means that your volatility risk is lower and impacts the options less. As a side benefit, the further out in time you go, the more theta decay is still present which means you have the chance of making more money.

📽️ Video Training:

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4. Use High Probability Setups (5 - 20 Delta)

Delta not only measures price movement but also gives an approximate probability of the option expiring in-the-money. Selling options with a 5-20 delta provides a high probability of profit.

✅ Strategy:

- Focus on selling options between 5-20 delta to maintain a probability of profit and win rate above 80%.
- Combine this approach with proper position sizing for added safety.

👉 Why This Works:

Smaller deltas (5 - 20) are less impacted by price movements than larger deltas. This means that lower deltas will be less impacted by volatility. This is a pros and cons situation because the lower the delta, the less money you make which is why 10 delta tends to be a good level to balance risk and profit well.

📽️ Video Training:

https://learn.optionsautotrader.com/volatility-book-trainings

5. Convert Undefined Trades Into Defined Trades

While undefined risk trades like naked puts can yield high premiums, they carry the danger of large losses during volatile markets because they aren't offset by any other long option.

✅ Strategy:

- Convert naked puts into put spreads or strangles into iron condors.
- Accept slightly lower premiums in exchange for clearly defined risk.

👉 Why This Works:

Defined risk trades are less impacted by volatility because they include a protective option that caps potential losses, limiting the effect of volatility-driven price swings. The long option leg in these strategies (like spreads) offsets some of the volatility increase, reducing overall position sensitivity to changes in implied volatility.

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6. Put On Volatility Hedges Once A Month

Volatility hedges, such as long VIX calls or put spreads on broad market indices, can offset losses during market downturns.

✅ Strategy:

- Allocate 3 - 5% of monthly premiums to hedging strategies.
- Consider VIX long calls, SPY long puts, or inverse ETFs like SQQQ.

👉 Why This Works:

There are two different types of hedges: hedges against risk and hedges against volatility. For example, a call credit spread only hedges against risk while long naked options are natural hedges against both risk and volatility. Because as volatility increases, the long options price will increase dramatically as well. Therefore, buying long options on VIX or SPY on a monthly basis would help cut down on volatility risk dramatically.

📽️ Video Training:

https://learn.optionsautotrader.com/volatility-book-trainings

7. Diversify Your Positions Based On VIX Correlation

Diversification for options sellers is more than just picking different assets or trading strategies. Many assets move together, especially during high-volatility periods, so diversifying across uncorrelated assets can decrease volatility risk.

✅ Strategy:

- Avoid placing all trades in highly correlated sectors or indices.
- Use correlation tools to spread positions across uncorrelated assets (e.g., pairing trades in SPY, GLD, and TLT).

👉 Why This Works:

When you spread risk across asset classes, it can help decrease risk. However, a volatility spike tends to affect every asset class except a few. The few exceptions tend to be precious metals (GLD or /GC) and bonds (TLT or /ZN).

📽️ Video Training:

https://learn.optionsautotrader.com/volatility-book-trainings

8. Implement Automated Risk Management

Emotion driven decisions often lead to poor outcomes. Automation removes emotion, ensures consistency, and enforces discipline. This applies to following your trading rules or automatically implementing any of the volatility prevention strategies above so that you don't have to constantly monitor the market.

✅ Strategy:

- Use software like the Options Auto Trader to automate entries, exits, and hedges. You can also use the Options Auto Trader to enable these volatility prevention strategies with a single click.

👉 Why This Works:

Although volatility can be properly hedged against and managed, it will take a ton of screen time to properly monitor the market and implement the strategies at the right time. Therefore, by allowing an automated system to do it for you, it can be done correctly every time, exactly when it needs to be done. The Options Auto Trader was built for options sellers to help them decrease trading risk so that they could keep their accounts safe and generate reliable monthly income.

📽️ Video Training:

https://learn.optionsautotrader.com/volatility-book-trainings

Bringing It All Together

Now that you understand each strategy in the **SAFE Volatility Checklist**, let's walk through a practical example of how to apply them. We'll start with a typical short strangle trade—a popular strategy among options sellers—and show how to transform it into a volatility-protected version using each checklist item.

Short Strangle Example

Let's say you decide to place a short strangle on SPY with the following setup:

- Sell 1 SPY 45 DTE Put at the 16 delta strike
- Sell 1 SPY 45 DTE Call at the 16 delta strike
- Total premium collected: $2.50

While this trade has a high probability of profit, it exposes you to undefined risk, sudden volatility spikes, and large losses if SPY makes a significant move. Let's apply each "SAFE" volatility checklist item to improve the setup.

Step #1: Adjust Your Buying Power Usage Based On VIX

If VIX is at $25, then you will limit your buying power usage to roughly 40%. You will then size your position sizing based on that. For example, if you have a $100K account, then you should only use 40K of your account max. That would mean you could easily have 2-3 trades open so you will enter one trade a week since a strangle trade is typically open for three weeks.

✅ *Result:* Limits potential losses during volatile conditions.

Step #2: Use A Bollinger Band To Avoid Market Crashes

Before entering the trade, you check SPY's Bollinger Bands. If the price is above the upper Bollinger Band, then you would wait about 30 days to enter the trade. If it is inside the Bollinger Band, then you would enter the trade.

✅ *Result:* Prevents entering during a potential market crash.

Step #3: Implement Longer DTEs (90 - 365 DTE)

Instead of using 30 DTE options, you select 120 DTE contracts. This reduces gamma risk and smooths out volatility swings.

✅ *Result:* Provides more time for premium decay and reduces sensitivity to short-term volatility.

Step #4: Use High Probability Setups (5 - 20 Delta)

You adjust the strikes to sell options with 10 delta instead of 16 delta. While the premium drops slightly to $1.80, your probability of profit increases.

✅ *Result:* Higher win rate and less chance of adverse price movement.

Step #5: Convert Undefined Trades Into Defined Trades

To cap potential losses, you convert the strangle into an iron condor by purchasing out-of-the-money options:

- Buy 1 SPY Put 10 points below the short put
- Buy 1 SPY Call 10 points above the short call

✅ *Result:* Clearly defined risk with a known maximum loss.

Step #6: Put On Volatility Hedges Once A Month

To hedge volatility, you buy a small VIX call option where the price is roughly 10% of the premium that you collected by selling the strangle. If volatility spikes, the hedge offsets some potential losses from the iron condor or strangle.

✅ *Result:* Reduces impact of sudden volatility surges.

Step #7: Diversify Your Positions Based On VIX Correlation

Instead of placing two SPY trades, you diversify by adding a position in GLD or TLT, which typically have lower correlations with SPY.

✅ *Result:* Minimizes portfolio-wide drawdowns during correlated market moves.

Step #8: Implement Automated Risk Management

Finally, you use the Options Auto Trader to:

- Automatically set stop-loss orders at 2x premium collected.
- Take profits at 50% premium decay.
- Exit early if volatility surges beyond a set threshold.
- You can also enable the other volatility prevention strategies, so that they automatically get deployed when it's time.

✅ *Result:* Removes emotions, ensures consistent execution, and provides a reliable source of income from trading.

Final Short Strangle Trade

By applying the **SAFE Volatility Checklist**, you transformed a risky short strangle into a stable, volatility-protected trade:

- Reduced buying power exposure
- Avoided poor market entry points
- Increased probability of profit
- Defined risk with an iron condor

- Added a volatility hedge
- Diversified positions
- Automated risk management

✅ *Outcome:* Lower stress, clearer risk parameters, and improved consistency.

Where Do I Go From Here?

You've learned how to prevent volatility from wreaking havoc on your trades, apply practical risk management, and use the SAFE Volatility Checklist to trade with more confidence and consistency. But knowing is only half the battle—the real transformation comes from putting these strategies into action.

To make that journey even easier, I've created two resources designed to help you take the next step:

🚀 30 Day Trial of the Options Auto Trader

Imagine having a tool that automatically applies the strategies you just learned—adjusting buying power based on VIX, implementing stop-losses, managing trade entries and exits, and even diversifying positions—all without you having to monitor the markets all day.

The **Options Auto Trader** does exactly that.

✅ Automate your entire options selling strategy
✅ Limit losses with built-in volatility protection
✅ Save hours each week while generating consistent income
✅ Trade confidently without being glued to your screen

👉 Start your 30 day trial now:
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About The Author

Austin Bouley is a seasoned options trader, software developer, and the creator of the **Options Auto Trader**.



His journey into trading began in 2016 after watching a documentary about Warren Buffet that sparked his curiosity in stocks.

Like many traders, Austin faced his share of setbacks—including blowing up his account twice—while experimenting with day trading, swing trading, and options.

His relentless pursuit of consistency led him to options selling. Options Selling was the first time that Austin was able to generate consistent returns regardless of the market.

But even with a solid strategy, the time commitment of managing trades was overwhelming, straining his personal life and marriage.

Determined to find a solution, Austin combined his software development skills with his options trading experience to create the **Options Auto Trader**—a platform that automates options strategies, reduces risk, and frees traders from being glued to their screens.

Since launching, his software has helped thousands of traders generate consistent income without the emotional rollercoaster that often accompanies manual trading or being glued to the screen 24/7.

Austin's passion for God, family, and helping others navigate the markets with confidence drives everything he does.

When he's not working on new ways to improve the Options Auto Trader, you'll find him spending time with his wife, enjoying the outdoors, playing pickleball or serving at his church.

👉 **Connect with Austin:**

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