## Contents

	1	MJ - ETFMG ALTERNATIVE HARVEST ETF	35
RSP - INVESCO S&P 500 EQUAL WEIGHT ETF	2	IBB - ISHARES NASDAQ BIOTECHNOLOGY ETF	36
SPY - SPDR S&P 500 ETF	3	XBI - SPDR S&P BIOTECH ETF	37
MDY - SPDR S&P MIDCAP 400 ETF	4	IHI - ISHARES U.S. MEDICAL DEVICES ETF	38
IJR - ISHARES CORE S&P SMALL-CAP ETF	5	IHF - ISHARES U.S. HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS ETF	39
IWM - ISHARES RUSSELL 2000 ETF	6	XES - SPDR S&P OIL & GAS EQUIPMENT & SERVICES ETF	40
QQQ - INVESCO QQQ TRUST	7	XOP - SPDR S&P OIL & GAS EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION ETF	41
XLK - SPDR TECHNOLOGY SELECT SECTOR FUND ETF	8	AMLP - ALPS ALERIAN MLP ETF	42
XLY - SPDR CONSUMER DISCRETIONARY SELECT SECTOR FUND ETF	9	FCG - FIRST TRUST NATURAL GAS ETF	43
XLI - SPDR INDUSTRIAL SELECT SECTOR FUND ETF	10	XME - SPDR S&P METALS AND MINING ETF	44
XLC - SPDR COMMUNICATION SERVICES SELECT SECTOR ETF	11	REMX - VANECK VECTORS RARE EARTH/STRATEGIC METALS ETF	45
XLF - SPDR FINANCIAL SELECT SECTOR FUND ETF	12	PHO - INVESCO WATER RESOURCES ETF	46
XLV - SPDR HEALTH CARE SELECT SECTOR FUND ETF	13	TLT - ISHARES 20+ YEAR TREASURY BOND ETF	47
XLP - SPDR CONSUMER STAPLES SELECT SECTOR FUND ETF	14	TLT - ISHARES 20+ YEAR TREASURY BOND ETF	48
XLU - SPDR UTILITIES SELECT SECTOR FUND ETF	15	TIP - ISHARES TIPS BOND ETF	49
XLRE - SPDR REAL ESTATE SELECT SECTOR FUND ETF	16	AGG - ISHARES CORE U.S. AGGREGATE BOND ETF	50
XLB - SPDR MATERIALS SELECT SECTOR FUND ETF	17	LQD - ISHARES IBOXX \$ INVESTMENT GRADE CORPORATE BOND ETF	51
XLE - SPDR ENERGY SELECT SECTOR FUND ETF	18	HYG - ISHARES IBOXX \$ HY CORP BOND FUND ETF	52
IGV - ISHARES EXPANDED TECH-SOFTWARE SECTOR ETF	19	DXY - US DOLLAR INDEX	53
SOXX - ISHARES PHLX SOX SEMICONDUCTOR SECTOR INDEX FUND ET	F 20	GLD-W - SPDR GOLD SHARES ETF	54
FDN - FIRST TRUST DOW JONES INTERNET ETF	21	GLD-D - SPDR GOLD SHARES ETF	55
SKYY - FIRST TRUST CLOUD COMPUTING ETF	22	SLV-W - ISHARES SILVER TRUST ETF	56
HACK - ETFMG PRIME CYBER SECURITY ETF	23	SLV-D - ISHARES SILVER TRUST ETF	57
IPAY - ETFMG PRIME MOBILE PAYMENTS ETF	24	GDX - VANECK VECTORS GOLD MINERS ETF	58
FINX - GLOBAL X FINTECH ETF	25	DBP - INVESCO DB PRECIOUS METALS FUND	59
XRT - SPDR S&P RETAIL ETF	26	DBE - INVESCO DB ENERGY FUND	60
ITB - ISHARES U.S. HOME CONSTRUCTION INDEX FUND ETF	27	DBB - INVESCO DB BASE METALS FUND	61
KRE - SPDR S&P REGIONAL BANKING ETF	28	DBA - INVESCO DB AGRICULTURE FUND	62
KIE - SPDR S&P INSURANCE ETF	29	BTCTUSD - BTC-USD	63
REZ - ISHARES RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE ETF	30	GBTC - GBTC	64
REM - ISHARES MORTGAGE REAL ESTATE ETF	31		
XAR - SPDR S&P AEROSPACE & DEFENSE ETF	32		
PBW - INVESCO WILDERHILL CLEAN ENERGY ETF	33		
TAN - INVESCO SOLAR ETF	34		

Thursday - 18 February 2021

TrendInvestorPro Annotated ETF ChartBook

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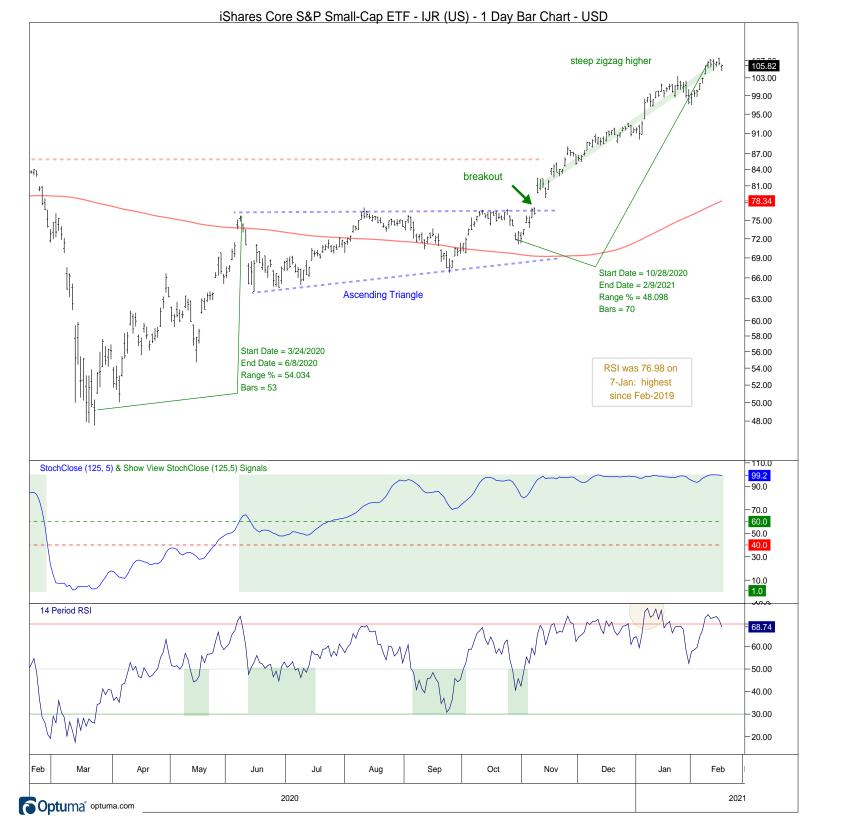


ETFs with a zigzag higher the last few months are in the trend-monitoring phase. The trends are up and strong, but there is no setup in play (mean-reversion pullback or consolidation). Now is simply the time to wait for a setup, plan profit targets, consider exit levels or employ stops.

The S&P 500 SPDR (SPY) has a modestly steep zigzag advance since the breakout on November 9thm the day the vaccine was announced. SPY is up around 20% since November, which is less than half of the 49% surge in IWM. Even though the advance in SPY is less steep, SPY still sports a series of higher highs and higher lows since November.

I could use the late January low and rising 50-day SMA to mark support, but a break below these levels would not be that bearish because it would set up the next mean-reversion opportunity (RSI dip into 30-50 zone). Notice the breaks below the 50-day in mid September and late October (gray shading).







ETFs in this group led the market higher since November with massive gains (33-47 percent) and then rested by stalling since February 9th. There is no pullback or pattern because this is a short stall. Moreover, these ETFs are not short-term oversold either. Thus, they are simply in the trend monitoring phase.

On the IWM chart, the thick green line defines the steep advance and the short blue lines show very short pullbacks (4-6 days). These pullbacks are too short for me and I would prefer a multi-week consolidation or pullback after a 49% surge. The other blue lines show the prior multi-week pullbacks and RSI dipped into the oversold zone each time. This is my preferred setup and I am willing to wait.







The Consumer Discretionary SPDR (XLY) shows a medium-term consolidation in Sep-Oct, breakout in late November and continuation higher since. The advance is punctuated by very short consolidations (blue lines) and only one oversold conditions (late January when RSI dipped below 50). Another short consolidation formed the last few days and another continuation higher could be in the cards.

At this point, there are not many, if any, medium-term patterns that stretch multiple weeks. Patterns are limited to days and any setups are very short-term at this stage. Personally, I do not trade such short-term patterns when they lack an oversold condition (RSI in the 30-50 zone). Short-term patterns with tight ranges require a close watch because the chance of whipsaw is high for short-term traders.

Medium-term setups take time and it could be a few weeks before we see one. Longer term traders can simply wait for some sort of trend reversal signal, such as StochClose turning bearish and/or a close below the 200-day.

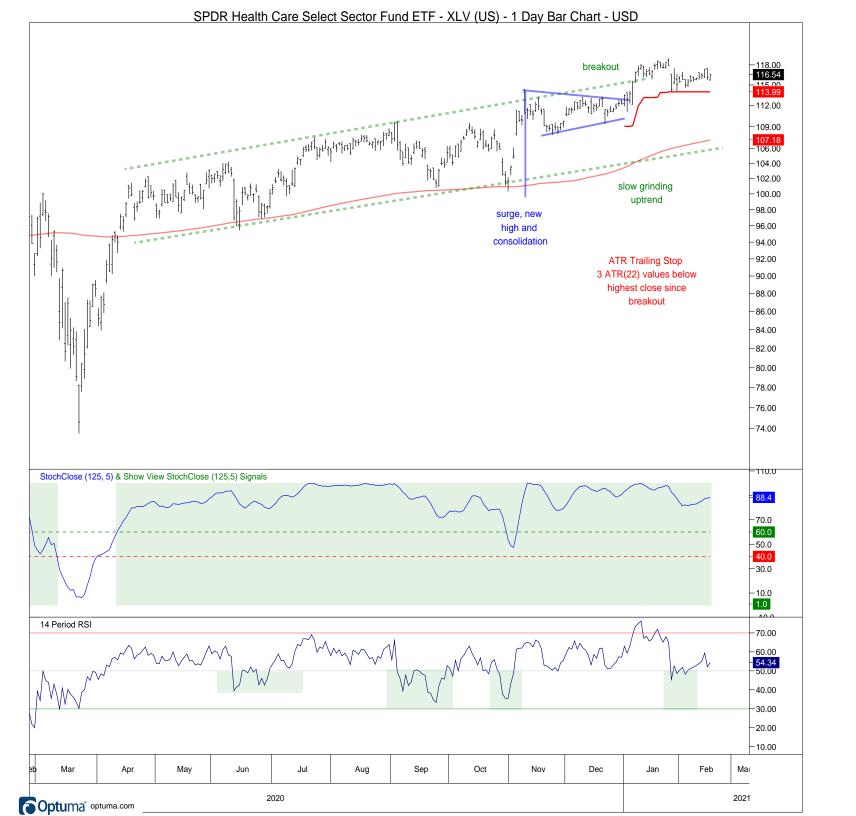


The Industrials SPDR (XLI) and Consumer Staples SPDR (XLP) are lagging the broader market since December, but both charts sport bullish consolidations. XLI is the stronger of the two because it is closer to a new high.

The XLI chart shows two bullish consolidations marked with blue shading. XLI stalled above its 200-day in Sep-Oct and broke out to new highs. The ETF then stalled again from mid December to mid February and is on the verge of a breakout. Short-term, the ETF broke out of a flag pattern in early February as RSI bounced from the oversold zone.









The Consumer Staples SPDR (XLP) hit a new high in mid November and then worked its way lower from mid December to mid February. A falling channel formed as the ETF fell to the rising 200-day. The trend is up and this channel represents a correction within a bigger uptrend. Watch for a breakout. RSI is also moving from the oversold zone.











The Software ETF (IGV) is in the trend monitoring phase after three breakouts since December.

Medium-term, the ETF broke out of the Ascending Triangle in mid December and hit a new high. Short-term, IGV fell back to the breakout zone with a falling flag and broke out. Most recently, A triangle consolidation formed and IGV broke out to new highs. Also notice that RSI dipped into the oversold zone twice in January.

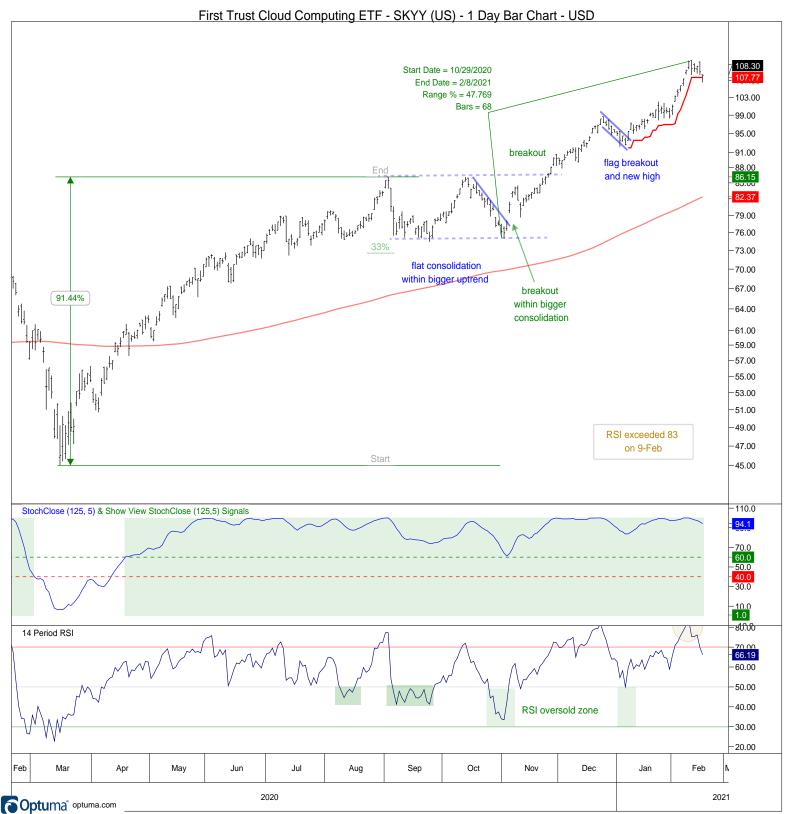


ETFs in this group are strong with new highs and sharp advances in February (SOXX, SKYY, IPAY, FINX, REMX). Like many an ETF, they are quite extended and ripe for a corrective period, but hardly bearish. This is the time to either ride the uptrend or exercise some patience for the next bullish setup.

For at least the third time since summer, the Semiconductor ETF (SOXX) has a bearish divergence working in RSI (yellow lines). A bearish momentum divergence usually accompanies an interim peak, but NOT all bearish divergences turn out bearish. In fact, I would speculate that fewer than a third actually result in significantly lower prices.

There are two HUGE problems with bearish divergences. First, they form in uptrends when price is records a higher high. Thus, acting on these signals is trading against the bigger trend. Second, a lower high in RSI shows less upside momentum, but momentum is still to the upside, just a little less than before. What's more important: a new high in price or a lower high in RSI?





The Cloud Computing ETF (SKYY) represents another one of these monster advances since November. The ETF consolidated with the other tech-related ETFs from early September to mid November and then broke out to new highs in late November. SKYY is up almost 50% since late October with just one small pullback along the way. The trend is up, momentum is strong and RSI exceeded 83 on Tuesday. RSI last touched the 83 area in January 2018 and a corrective period followed. As with any strong advance, picking the spot for a pullback or consolidation is full hardy. Nevertheless, SKYY and others remain very extended. Again, this puts them in the trend monitoring phase. The red line shows the ATR Trailing Stop at 107.77 for reference. This is a short-term trailing stop based on the flag breakout.





The Mobile Payments ETF (IPAY) and FinTech ETF (FINX) show just how unreliable short-term support breaks can be. IPAY broke below its mid January lows with a sharp decline in late "January. This ""support break"" was" the distraction, not the signal. It is often better to ignore short-term bearish signals when the bigger trend is up because the odds still favor a resolution in the direction of the bigger uptrend. Sure, one day a short-term bearish reversal will result in a bigger trend change, but these signals are more the exception than the norm. The long-term trend for IPAY was up and RSI dipped into the oversold zone (30-50). This oversold condition within a bigger uptrend provided the mean-reversion setup. IPAY obliged with a surge to new highs.



The FinTech ETF (FINX) is in a strong uptrend as well, but the ten day Rate-of-Change exceeded 15% and reached its highest level since mid April. A sharp advance off a low is like a rocket lifting off. It shows enough upward thrust to sustain an advance. In contrast, an outsized gain after an extended advance shows signs of excess. As with any overextended condition, this is not outright bearish. It just warrants some caution going forward and increases the odds for a correction of some sort.



The Retail SPDR (XRT) and Alternative Harvest ETF (MJ) went parabolic on the way up and fell sharply after these explosive moves. They need time to settle before coming back on my radar.



The Home Construction ETF (ITB) remains strong with a breakout, follow through and new high. Overall, ITB surged some 150% in 148 days and then consolidated with a narrowing range for over three months. Apparently, multi-month corrections still exist. ITB broke out with a surge in the second half of January and this signaled an end to the corrective period, and a resumption of the bigger uptrend. The breakout zone held on the little throwback in early February and ITB popped to a new high in mid February. The December-January lows mark key support for now.



We have a big group with short-term consolidations into late January, breakouts in early February and big moves this month. This group has representatives from finance (XLF, KRE) and energy (DBE, XLE, XES, XOP, FCG), all of which are up double digits this month (12 trading days). XOP and FCG are up more than 20%. DBB and DBA are not up as much, 8.5% and 3.05%, respectively, but these moves are big relative to their charts.

These ETFs are in the trend-monitoring phase. Now is the time to consider a profit target, a trailing stop or an exit strategy. There is no right or wrong answer here. Just plan your trade and trade your plan.

The chart for KRE shows the ATR Trailing Stop rising along with the February surge. KRE is up 15% in 12 days. It would take a 5% decline from current levels to trigger this stop. Traders must, therefore, decide if they want to ride the trend and risk the pullback or exit now and move on to the next trade. Traders can also consider taking partial profits with a profit target and then set a trailing stop for the remainder.





The Residential REIT ETF (REZ) continues to make good on its wedge breakout and is challenging the November high. Overall, I see a slow uptrend since April, a falling wedge into January and a wedge breakout working. The green line marks the initial stop-loss and it held as REZ consolidated around the breakout zone. The red line shows the ATR Trailing Stop (2 x ATR(22) for reference.



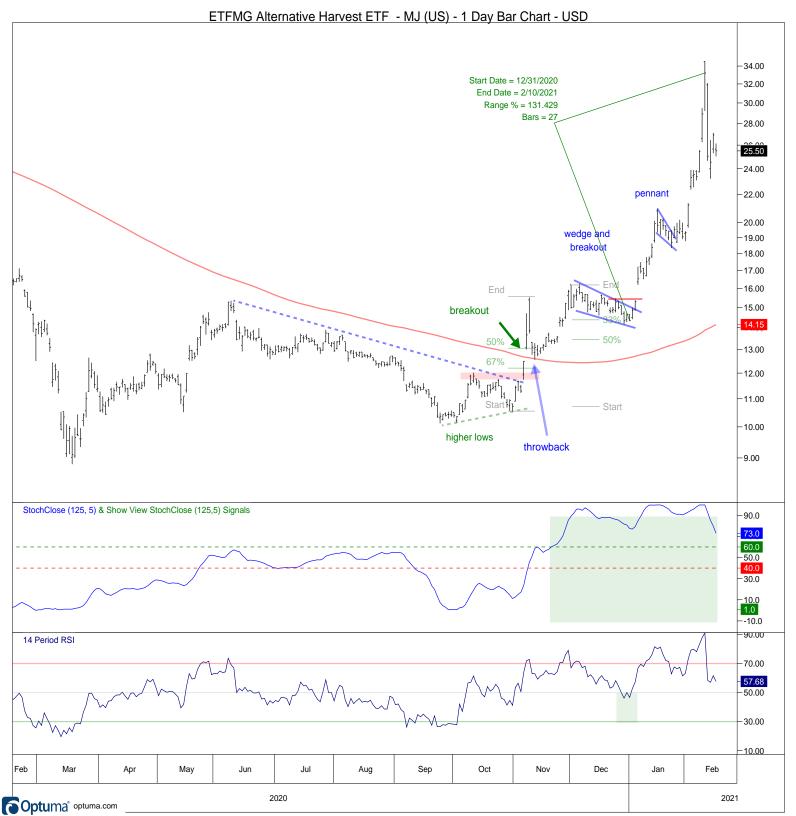




ETFs in this next group formed short-term corrections after new highs. HACK, PBW and TAN stalled over the last few weeks with trading ranges. A consolidation within an uptrend is typically a bullish continuation pattern that represents a mere rest (pause). Only one ETF is technically oversold: RSI for PBW is just below 50.

Note that these ETFs were leading in late January with some of the biggest gains and they are lagging over the last four weeks. They are basically unchanged over the last 20 days and SPY is up 3.6%. Even though the late January lows mark """support"", I would not consider a" break below these levels as bearish. Instead, such a move would set up the next mean-reversion opportunity because RSI would be in the oversold zone. Check out the late "January ""support"" breaks in IPAY" and FINX for bullish support break setups.





The Retail SPDR (XRT) and Alternative Harvest ETF (MJ) went parabolic on the way up and fell sharply after these explosive moves. They need time to settle before coming back on my radar.



The Biotech ETF (IBB) and Biotech SPDR (XBI) are working their way higher with a zigzag up the last few months. RSI has been above 50 since November 4th and pullbacks have been quite limited. They are also holding their ATR Trailing Stops.

Both fell back the last few days, but are not oversold and did not trigger their trailing stops. This mild pullback could give way to a bounce, but these two are also quite extended. 70 days without much of a pullback. IBB is up 30% since November and XBI is up over 50%.





The Medical Devices ETF (IHI) represents the strongest of the four ETFs in slow and steady uptrends (XLV, IHI, IHF, PHO). It is the strongest because it hit a new high this week. The other three are quite close to new highs. The IHI chart shows a zigzag uptrend with several pullbacks along the way. Sometimes RSI flirts with the oversold zone for a few weeks and sometimes it bounces out immediately. The dip in late January did not last long as RSI bounced and the ETF moved to a new high. These ETFs are simply in the trend monitoring phase.



The Healthcare Providers ETF (IHF) hit a new high in early January and then consolidated into mid February. RSI dipped below 50 a couple times and is currently below 50 for a mild oversold condition. A triangle consolidation is taking shape on the price chart and a breakout would argue for further gains.



The Energy SPDR (XLE), Oil & Gas Equipment & Services ETF (XES) and Oil & Gas Exploration & Production ETF (XOP) also formed bull flags as RSI dipped into the oversold zone at the end of January. All three broke out and extended after their breakouts.

XES is shown with the ATR Trailing Stop, which is 2 ATR(22) values below the highest close since the breakout. This means it will rise as long as prices rise after the breakout. XES is currently up over 14.6% this month and up 100% since late October.









ETFs in this group (XLB, AMLP, XME) also have flag breakouts, but their post-breakout extension was not as strong as the extensions seen in KRE and XES. Nevertheless, these ETFs have uptrends, flags, flag breakouts and the breakouts are holding. This example shows XME with a bounce off the 33-50% retracement zone and a flag breakout. This breakout could fail so make sure to plan accordingly. A failure would not be bearish per se because it would set up the next mean-reversion opportunity.

The Metals & Mining SPDR (XME) is somewhat related to base metals because it has aluminum stocks (18.6%) and copper stocks (5.3%). The biggest holding, however, goes to steel stocks, which account for 48%. XME is largely a play on steel.



























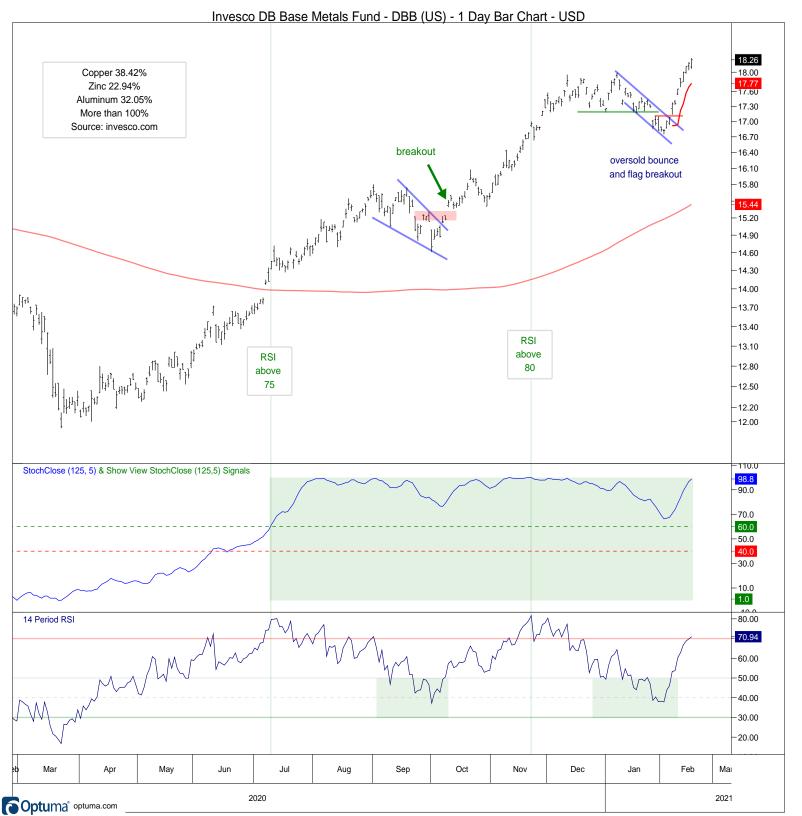
SLV sports a bullish chart overall with a long-term uptrend (price is above the rising 200-day and StochClose is bull). The ETF broke out of a triangle consolidation in mid December and this breakout is holding, even though follow through has been rather choppy. Nonetheless, the breakout zone held and remains valid as long as SLV holds 22.







Energy related ETFs continued strong as oil surged and the DB Energy ETF (DBE) extended on its flag breakout. DBE has been trending higher since the mid November breakout with a series of small consolidations along the way. Notice that RSI has been above 50 since November 9th (67 days). With another big week, DBE is up 13.70% for the month and this is the largest 12 day advance since late May. RSI is also back above 80 for the second time this month. The trend is up and strong, but .... you know the drill. The red line marks the ATR Trailing Stop for reference.



The DB Base Metals ETF (DBB) provides another example of short-term support breaks being unreliable when they occur in long-term uptrends. Also keep in mind that DBB has three moving parts (Copper, Aluminum and Zinc). Each one of these has its own support level and their support levels don't always match. Support and resistance get even more imprecise for ETFs with dozens of moving parts.

DBB hit a new high in early January, the ETF was above the rising 200-day and StochClose has been bullish since early July. DBB broke support in early February, but this break created an oversold condition within a bigger uptrend as RSI dipped below 40. Furthermore, a flag formed and these patterns are typical for corrections within a bigger uptrend. DBB broke out of the flag and is back near its January high. The red line shows the ATR Trailing Stop for reference.



The DB Agriculture ETF (DBA) broke out in November and worked its way higher with two short pennants along the way (blue lines). The ATR Trailing Stop held the entire way as a steep rising channel took hold. While a channel break and move below the ATR Trailing Stop would be short-term negative, it would just set up the next mean-reversion opportunity when RSI dips into the oversold zone. There is no setup now, just a strong uptrend that requires some monitoring.

