



BUDGETING AND SAVING TIPS

These tips should make it simpler to budget and save, even if you have limited income.

1. Keep track of every time you spend money for at least one month — use a pocket notebook that you carry around with you everywhere. Write down a purchase before you make it, so you have time to think about whether you actually need it. If you do not make the purchase, put a line through it. This allows you to see the times you were able to resist the temptation to spend.
2. Add up the expenses in your pocket notebook for a month to see how much you really spend (as opposed to how much you think you spend). Simply being aware of your spending is sometimes enough to help you control it.
3. Never pay more for anything than you have to. Compare prices at different stores — the same item may cost half as much just down the street. Always look for sales and discounts and use coupons.
4. Save supermarket and drugstore circulars for a couple of months to find patterns in sales and discounts. Often, certain items are on sale around the same time each month.
5. When shopping online or on your phone, always do an internet search for coupons and use websites/phone apps like retailmenot to get coupon codes.
6. Call your cable, internet, and phone service providers and threaten to cancel your service unless they reduce the amount you pay monthly. Be sure to compare prices for similar cable, internet, and cell phone plans from different companies. Monthly prices can vary widely for the same service.
7. Call your credit card company(ies) and request an interest rate reduction every six months to lower your credit card bills.
8. Make use of free entertainment, such as borrowing free DVDs from public libraries, free social activities at public libraries, seeing free movies and concerts in the summer at parks throughout the city, and free days at museums, zoos, and botanical gardens.

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