



Ways to Save Money

Get a Piggy Bank – Put up a piggy bank at your home. This creates a visual reminder to capture those little handfuls of change you come home with. At the end of the year, you will have a nice little savings fund for a fun purchase, or even to fund a real savings account.

Use Open Source Software – Utilize free, open-source software like OpenOffice (like MS Office) and Firefox Internet browser.

Get Cash Back for Your Online Purchases – Use a website like Ebates.com to shop online. They will give you a percentage back on the money you spend online at hundreds of popular stores. Combine that with one of the best cash back credit cards and you will really be saving money.

Use CFL Bulbs – Compact florescent lamps (CFLs) cost more on the front-end, but they will save you money and energy in the end.

Combine Coupons with Local Sales – Save up coupons and use them in conjunction with sales at local markets. You can end up either with items being free or at a greatly discounted price.

Drive Your Car Until it Dies – No car payments or big cash outlays. Lower car insurance. In addition, you get the satisfaction of knowing you used this depreciating asset to its fullest potential.

DIY Greeting Cards – Design and print your own greeting cards. You can design and print a greeting card for around .50/card, which is a good price compared to \$3.99 cards.

Use Cash for Better Negotiations – Larger ticket items definitely benefit from you waving around cash. You are able to negotiate great deals when they see you are a serious buyer.

Consider the Reviews – Do your research before you buy an expensive item (or even a not so expensive item). Check reviews on Amazon look up reviews online, check a few forums, look up prices at different stores...you can easily save money and you might even find out the item you thought you wanted is not so great.

Reuse Work Clothes – Reuse clothes that did not get dirty during the day, this cuts my laundry down, water, and electric bill.

Consider a Movie Subscription Service – If you currently spend a lot of money on entertainment at the theater or at the movie rental store from month to month, consider saving time, gas, and money by subscribing to an online movie service like Netflix.

Clip Coupons – Find the best coupons in the Sunday paper every week for grocery and other household items.

Monthly Spending Review – Write down all the expenses you make in a month. Review the list and try to eliminate the unnecessary expenditures. Consider using a budgeting tool to take your review efforts to a new level.

Avoid Financing at All Costs – Delaying instant gratification by saving for purchases before buying will hone patience and aid in bringing wealth and peace of mind to all who are exercised thereby. This element of self-discipline may be one of the oldest, simplest, and most base elements of financial success... but regrettably, it has also become a lost art in our common culture. Avoid financing and save for things before you buy them.

No Restaurant Challenge – Take a week out of the month, or better yet, a month out of the year and commit to dining inside your home only. No dining out. See how much you can save by following this.

Do Free Activities – Find free stuff to do. For example, on Sunday mornings go to a big bookstore and read books in the store without having to pay for them.

Keep Larger Bills – Never break down your large bills. You will be less likely to spend it. Smaller bills are spent quicker.

No Second Thoughts – Only buy things that you really need. Avoid buying things that you have second thoughts about or are not sure you will need.

Dine Out for Special Occasions Only – Only dine out for special occasions. You could get a week's worth of food at the grocery store for the same amount that you pay for a single dinner out for one person. When you do dine out find and use a coupon.

Consider Quality – Buy things of high quality even if it costs a bit more up front. Look back at all of the things you skimmed on over the years and ended up having to replace earlier than you expected. Suddenly that big sale or off-brand item does not seem like such a good idea. This does not mean everything that is more expensive is better, but use your smarts and know when to spend to find the best bang for your buck instead of looking for the absolute lowest price on something. "You get what you pay for" still holds true for many things.

No Credit Cards – Cut up the credit cards and live only on what you make. No interest. No late fees. No problems. If you currently struggle with credit card debt, consider talking to a financial coach to credit a debt reduction plan to help you pay it off.

Pack Your Lunch – Do not go out for lunch every day; pack lunch instead. This can easily save you \$50 a week.

Do not Pay for Your Kids - If you do dine out during the week, make sure you visit one of the many places that offers “kids eat free” specials. At least you will not be paying for their meals.

Do not Forget to Ask – Ask for a discount. We always ask about discounts and have found that many places we would not have thought of give unadvertised discounts. For example, our preschool offered a discount to pay in full. As it turns out, many things are negotiable if you ask.

Savings Goal Reminder – Carry a list in your wallet of financial goals that you will see every time you take it out to buy something.

Shopping Plan of Attack – Look at all the sale ads before you grocery shop and go to the store with the most sales. Write down a list before I go to any store and it saves you from buying unnecessary items.

Vacation During No Child Care Days – Plan your vacation days on the days your children have half days of school or teacher in-service days. It yields more time with kids and lowers childcare costs.

Quit Your Bad Habits – Be they eating out, smoking, or going out partying. Every time you stop yourself from doing it, put the money you would have spent into your savings.

Meat Alternative - Meat is generally the most expensive source of protein. Beans and nuts are pound for pound far more nutritious for your protein dollar and better for you too. If you cannot stomach the idea of giving up beef, consider ordering your beef online through sites like OmahaSteaks.com.

Daily Spending Goal - Set a daily goal for yourself: how much money you are going to spend during the day.

Deal of the Day Sites – Groupon.com. This is a fantastic site to get some great group deals from local businesses. The only thing to watch out for is the “I don’t really need that but it’s such a great deal” syndrome.

Online First, In-store Second – Always do comparison-shopping online before going to stores. This will allow you to find the best deal without wasting time and gas driving around town.

Consider a Stay-Cation – No need for a big expensive vacation. Take a week off work and simply do a bunch of activities in your own hometown. Skip the hotel and airfare costs and spend more money on entertainment and dining out for the week.

Wash Your Own Work Clothes – If you need a lot of professional clothes for work, buy the generic equivalent of Woolite and wash your work clothes with it instead of regular harsh detergents. It costs a bit more initially for the detergent but saves your clothes from fading, thinning, or frizzing, so I can wear them a lot longer and not have to buy new things. Also, use Dryel instead of dry cleaning my clothes as much as possible.

Do it Right the First Time – If you are working on a car repair or home improvement, consider doing it right the first time. If you try to cut corners it will likely end up costing you more money in the end.

Early to Bed, More in the Bank – Go to bed earlier. Saves light, heat (in the winter) and late night nibbles.

Create a Savings Category on the Budget – Make saving part of your budget and set saving goals. If you monitor your progress toward a goal, you are much more likely to succeed in hitting that goal than if you just hoped to save money some day. Monitoring anything makes you more aware of it.

Utilize Free Online Services – Dump the monthly subscriptions and read newspapers and magazines online.

Be Purposely Low in Cash – Do not take a lot of money with you when you go out, so even if you have the temptation to buy something you will not, if it's really that important you will surely go back home to get the money. If it is not, then you just saved yourself from spending money.

Reduce Your Medical Bills – If you have a hospital bill, just call up the billing department and ask if you can get a discount for paying cash, or if you can pay a lower amount. Often they will be happy that they are just collecting a bill, and are willing to cut 10-20% off your amount.

Lower Your Interest Rates – Call your bank and/or credit card company to negotiate a better interest rate on your loan or outstanding debt. This can save you hundreds in interest payments.

Do not Pay for Your Credit Report – Instead, visit annualcreditreport.com and get your truly free credit report.

Kill the Energy Vampire – Connect all of your appliances to surge protectors and shut the switch off when you are finished using them. Most of today's appliances constantly use electricity when plugged in to the outlet. This investment will save your appliances and save you in energy costs.

Cut the Cable TV – Move all your TV watching to online services like Hulu.com. It is free and has fewer commercials.

Pay Yourself First – Put money in your saving account every paycheck. Make it the first thing you do and then pay all bill with your remaining funds.

Cancel Your Home Phone Line – Not using your home phone as much? Consider going to your cell phone for most of your calls. Install FaceTime on your computer for making computer-to-computer calls or cheap long distance calls. Video is better than voice anyway.

Work Out and Exercise at Home – Skip the monthly gym membership and start working out at home or in your neighborhood. Run or walk around the block. Rent workout DVDs from the library to do at home in front of your own TV.

Fuel Efficient Auto – If you travel a great deal during the week, consider a high fuel-efficient vehicle to save on rising gas prices.

Read the Fine Print – Do a thorough review of all your monthly bills. Study the fine print to see exactly what you are being charged for. Cut out any charges for services you are not using.

The Savings Trade-Off - Think about saving money in terms of trade-offs – save money here, spend it there. If you are planning on a vacation this year, keep that in mind as you are looking to save money elsewhere. It will give you a sense of accomplishment as you save more towards a particular goal and will motivate you to be more creative.

Bring Lunch for Errands – Even if you do not have a day job, when running errands in town, pack a lunch instead of eating out. This is a healthier alternative that saves you time and money while watching your waistline.

Do-it-Yourself Home Repair and Improvement – Most basic home repairs you can do yourself if you take some time to study the manual or look online for video tutorials. Moreover, basic improvements, like painting can easily be done cheaper if you use your own labor.

Stretch Your Coffee Beans – Use half of your used coffee beans in the next batch. Repeat this cycle and you will only use half the recommended scoop each time. Some coffee drinkers swear by this method.

Go on a Spend-Free Splurge – Commit to a week without spending new money. Make it a goal to only spend money for the week that you earn from selling old stuff or making returns.

Separate Your Savings - Set up a separate bank account with a credit union other than your main credit union. Deposit extra money in the account whenever possible. This will create a nice barrier between you and your savings.

Start a Dinner Club – If you miss the social element of dining with friends, start having each other over to your houses and cook for each other. Similarly to eating at home, you can save money by making your own meals instead of buying pre-prepared meals.

Talk Yourself Out of It – Install a dialog in your head that uses the following questions: “Do I NEED this, or do I just WANT this? If I think I need it, do I have others like it, or will it fulfill a need I cannot meet without it? If I WANT it, will I really enjoy it and appreciate it, or is it just going to make its way to the back of the closet, the bottom of the toolbox, or the one-more-thing-to-dust category?”

Go Cash Only – Avoid using credit cards for a while. Spend only on things you can already afford with cash, or with your debit card.

Throw Out the “Deals” – Stop looking at deals and sales unless you are really in need of something. This means cancel all the catalog subscriptions and throwing out the junk mail when it arrives.

Avoid the Deal Websites – Do not visit online shopping or deal sites unless you have a plan for buying something you need. Doing so will tempt fate.

Consider a Refinance on Your Loans – With interest rates at historic lows, you may be able to significantly lower your monthly payment and overall interest owed on a loan by refinancing at a low mortgage rate.

Get Social Savings – Use social media, Twitter, Facebook, email etc and follow, fan or subscribe to companies whose products you regularly purchase. You will get all sorts of deals and offers that way. You might be better off using a different account or setting up good filtering so you do not get overwhelmed.

Use Only One Car – Get rid of the second car. Just trying to get by on one car may seem like a challenge, but it’s well worth it if you are a two-car family. How does at least \$500 in insurance savings sound to you?

Skip the New Bottled Water – Do not buy bottled water to carry around. Simply refill a permanent container.

Grow Your Own Organic Veggies – Organics usually cost more than other veggies. Consider growing some of your own organic vegetables.

Don’t Believe the Price Tag – Realize that price tags are liars. Most locally based retailers are willing to negotiate and therefore their price tags are just the starting points. Even managers at large national retailers will occasionally be willing to negotiate. It all starts with your willingness to ask.

Mend Your Own Socks – Yes. Repair your own socks. You can make them last three or four times as long as they otherwise would, and it really adds up.

Limit the Impulse Buys – Try to limit impulse purchases. A few small items can add up quickly, and a major purchase like a new car can haunt you for years. Have a plan. A marketer's number one job is to separate you from your money. Moreover, there are many good marketers out there. My rule is to never go shopping without a list or a clear idea of what you I am looking for. Otherwise, I will end up spending more than I had planned to spend.

Diversify Your Investments – Do not risk everything on one endeavor. Invest in stocks, mutual funds, bonds, real estate, etc.

Buy Store Brands – Most of these products come from the exact same factory as the “brand name” equivalent – and you can usually find this on the box – but they cost less.

Line Dry Your Clothes - Cut down on energy costs by drying your clothes on a clothesline. They have clotheslines for inside the home as well now.

Check You are Warranties and Ask for Free Repairs – If something breaks; do not immediately run out to buy something new. Look to utilize any available warranties or free repair offers you can find. Some manufacturers are so proud of their products that they will repair them for free.

Raise Your Deductible – Raise your car insurance deductible to a higher level. This can cut your premiums by several dollars a month. Just make sure you have the cash saved to cover the deductible in case something happens.

Budget for Irregular Expenses – Set up a monthly line item in your savings account for bills that don't come due every month. For example, car repairs. If you know that you will spend around \$600 on car repairs every year, put \$50 a month in savings so when the inevitable breakdown happens you do not have to charge it on a credit card. In the meantime, draw interest rather than having to pay it to someone else because you did not plan in advance.

Get the Kids Involved – Involve your children in the process of saving money. For each coupon they bring home, split the savings with them. For instance, if they give you a fifty cents coupon, give them twenty-five cents into their savings account. Thus, saving for both the family and the children.

Car Pool – If you drive a car going to work, ask some office mates who could ride with you so that they can share for gas money.

Wait 2 Days – On purchases over \$100, wait 2 days to think it over before you actually make the purchase.

Make a List, Baby – Before buying anything, or even heading to the store, make a list so that you will not be tempted to buy something more.

Utilize Online Coupon Sites – There are many websites that offer coupons that cannot be found in the Sunday paper. They are free to join and easy to use.

Two is Better Than One, in the Dryer – It might sound crazy, but tear dryer sheets in half for the dryer. A half sheet is just as effective.

Google for Promo Codes – When you get to the shopping cart, you will see a space to enter a coupon code or promo code. Instead of just making the purchase, do a quick Google search for your item plus “promo code“. Maybe you will find a nice 10% off code to save you money at the last minute.

Install a Programmable Thermostat - This awesome invention can help you save 10 to 20% on your energy bill. Makes saving a no-brainer.

Use Your Library More – Instead of buying books and renting movies, use your local library to check out books and movies for free. They also typically have free Wi-Fi and computers you can take advantage of.

Sweep the Kitchen – Save money by being a creative cook. Use ingredients on hand, rather than buying ingredients to make a specific dish. Food does not go to waste and you will create some new and different salads, casseroles, etc.

Free Eggs – Four chickens on a quarter acre of land provide free eggs, natural insect control, and free fertilizer.

Cure Your Savings – When shopping for over-the-counter medicines compare the labels between the generic and name brand items. Usually they are the same and usually you can get the generic for about 40 percent less than the name brand.

Practice Hypermiling – Drive slower, brake as little as possible, and keep your tires properly inflated. All will help to conserve on fuel expenses.

Truly Save, Not Spend Less – The best way to save money, is to deposit money in any bank as savings deposit for use at a future time. Do not confuse spending less with true savings.

Bundle Your Savings – Bundle your TV, Internet and phone services. This can typically save you good money each month.

Do not be a Captive Consumer – Prepare in advance when you might be stuck in a place where the pricing gets marked up because of low competition (e.g. Movie Theater, airport, zoo, etc.). Bring your own snack, or eat at home just before heading to these places.

Invest in a Deep Freeze – If you have a big family, consider buying a deep freeze so you can buy more in bulk, and do more batch cooking.

Eat Before You're Entertained – Eat your meals at home before going to theaters, sporting events, etc.

Brew Your Own Coffee - Stop spending upwards of \$5.00 per day on a cup of coffee. Make it at home and bring it to work in a thermos.

Turn Off the Lights – Make it a habit to turn off the lights when you are the last person to leave a room.

Clean with the News – Use old newspapers instead of paper towels with an eco-friendly cleaning product to wipe glass surfaces.

Create Your Own Cleaning Rags – Cut up old clothes that have holes or stains and use them around the house for cleaning, dusting, and grease rags. Do not buy paper towels anymore.

Split the Meal – Portion sizes are huge these days. When dining out, split a nicer meal with your significant other.

Buy Used from Craigslist – When you are considering a purchase, first look at Craigslist to see if there is a lightly used version of the product you can purchase for a heavily discounted price.

Pay Less in Taxes Next Year – Shelter your money from taxes by putting it in a 401K or traditional IRA.

Get Excited About Saving – Find a passion for saving money. Not because you want to hoard all your cash, but because you want to use it for good. Think about how many lives you could change if you saved more of your money to give it away. Alternatively, think about how great your kid's future could be if you saved more money for their education and general well-being. Moreover, do not forget about your own retirement. Enjoy watching your savings grow knowing that you will not have to depend on someone else for your future.