



## 50 Budget Tips Checklist

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- 1. **Set REALISTIC goals for future spending.** Don't fool yourself or your budget. Set goals you can live with so you won't get discouraged. Use a [Spendtracker](#) !
- 2. **Don't pay banking fees.** Shop around for a bank that doesn't charge fees and you could save over \$100 a year.
- 3. **Start an automatic savings plan with your bank.** Even small amounts added every pay period can compound to a large amount over time.
- 4. **Open an online savings account.** Most online accounts offer a 4% interest rate. That's much better than the 1% you get at your current bank.
- 5. **Avoid ATM fees.** Only withdraw money from machines approved by your bank.
- 6. **Use reward credit cards and get cash back or earn credit for rewards.** A great way to save money or get free items.
- 7. **Pay Bills on time.** Don't miss payments, you will incur late fees and it's just not worth the extra money. Get organized and pay bills on time.
- 8. **Pay Bills Online.** You save on postage and avoid the risk of paying late fees if you have it automatically debited each month.
- 9. **If you use checks, don't buy them from the bank.** Online retailers sell them for MUCH cheaper.
- 10. **Comparison shop before you buy big ticket items such as TV's, Computers, etc.** Check out the price of all the stores in your area and search online for a better deal before you buy.
- 11. **Use store rewards cards to save money when you purchase or to accrue credit at the store.** i.e. Kroger, CVS, Office Depot, Staples, American Eagle, etc.
- 12. **Buy as much as you can online.** Save money on gas by buying online. Many stores offer free shipping if you buy a certain amount.
- 13. **Bundle Cable and Internet or Phone and Internet.** Many cable and phone companies now offer both in one package which can save money.
- 14. **Cut out some of your cable channels.** Do you really need 500 channels? Try downgrading your service and see if you really miss it.
- 15. **Cancel Your Home Phone.** If you and your family use cell phones, cancel the home phone, you probably don't use it much anyway.
- 16. **Consider VOIP telephone service.** If you use the home phone a lot and can't cancel it, try VOIP. Prices are lower and the service is great.
- 17. **Use the library to borrow movies, CDs, books instead of buy them.**
- 18. **Cancel subscriptions.** Read magazines and newspapers online.
- 19. **Read magazines and books for free at bookstores.** It's becoming the next big hangout, meet friends, read, and it's free.
- 20. **Refill ink cartridges instead of buying new ones.**
- 21. **Use open source software like OpenOffice for your computing needs.** It's free or cheaper than the originals.
- 22. **Use CFL Bulbs (compact fluorescent light) instead of regular light bulbs.** These bulbs use 75% less energy and last 10 times longer.

- 23. Buy energy efficient appliances.** Look for the Energy Star on appliances and lighting. Consider the annual energy cost and cost of product before you buy.
- 24. Use a programmable thermostat to control your heating/cooling bill.** You can save 10-20% on each month's bill.
- 25. Turn off the lights when not using a room.**
- 26. Shut air vents in rooms you don't use often.** Shutting vents in unused rooms can save on your heating and cooling bill.
- 27. Change the filters in air conditioners and furnaces.** Keeps your air cleaner and keeps your systems running more affordably and efficiently.
- 28. Keep insurance.** Pay life insurance annually and car insurance semi-annually. Insurance companies charge you more if you pay monthly, quarterly or semi-annually. Pay yearly/semi-annually and you'll pay less.
- 29. Raise your deductible** on car insurance and home owners insurance. You'll pay less on your yearly premium.
- 30. Say no to extended warranties on small items.** A \$99 two year extension on a \$400 product is not worth it. Warranties are basically insurance, and you don't need to insure such a small amount.
- 31. Take advantage of employer 401(k) matches.** If your employer matches 401(k) contributions, do everything you can to take full advantage of that match.
- 32. Keep your tires inflated at the correct pressure.** It keeps you safe and costs less on gas.
- 33. Keep your car well-maintained.** Get scheduled oil changes and yearly tune-ups for your car. Keeping your car in good shape can save money down the road.
- 34. Buy a new car online.** Search the internet for car inventory close to you and see what dealerships offer the best deal. If you have to drive 50 miles to get a new car for \$5000 less, it's definitely worth it.
- 35. Don't buy hot gas.** Buy gas during the morning or evening hours, when it's cool, or you will be buying gas at a time when it's expanded (and thus getting less).
- 36. Carpool –** Find other colleagues to ride to work with or carpool the kids to school and after school activities and share costs with other workers/parents.
- 37. Stop smoking & reduce/eliminate alcohol consumption.**
- 38. Eat leftovers.** Find new recipes you can use to re-use the meat or vegetables from the night before.
- 39. Take your lunch to work at least a few days a week**
- 40. Eat right and exercise daily.** You'll reduce health costs. Start doing something NOW
- 41. Buy generic over-the-counter medicines.** Same product, less-cost. Ask your pharmacist if there is a generic product for the medicine your doctor prescribes.
- 42. Get a 3 Month Prescription of your medicine.** If you take a prescription medication on a regular basis, ask your doctor to write a three month prescription. Instead of paying three co-pays, you only pay one.
- 43. Use grocery store coupons.** Challenge yourself to make a meal with only products you have coupons for.
- 44. Try the store brands.** Brand names are often no better than generic. Give the store brand a try.
- 45. Don't go grocery shopping when you're hungry.** You'll spend more and buy more things that you don't really need.
- 46. Make a list when you grocery shop and STICK to it.** This way you'll avoid purchasing items that look good and you'll only get what you need.
- 47. Avoid buying clothes that require drying cleaning.**
- 48. Buy your winter clothes at the end of winter/beginning of spring. Buy summer clothing at the end of summer/beginning of fall.** Sales at the end of the season offer great savings for the next year.
- 49. Book your flights and cruises way in advance.** You can get lower prices.
- 50. Take long weekend trips within a few hours drive of where you live instead of big overseas trips.** Even though gas is expensive, it still beats the costs of air travel, car rental, etc.