

BE A SAVVY CONSUMER

Practical solutions to save more + spend less



Saving for retirement is critical to our long-term financial health, yet more than half of American workers have less than \$25,000 in total retirement savings¹. Most say they don't have enough disposable income to commit to retirement savings². So we're working to change that. Following some of the tips below will help you become a savvy consumer and free up some cash to invest in your retirement plan.



HOME

- Unplug appliances when not in use to save energy
- Take shorter showers to reduce your water bill
- View more tips to make your home more energy efficient www.energystar.gov/home
- Contact your utility company for a free home energy audit
- Locate rebates on energy-efficient products www.energystar.gov/rebatefinder
- Consider refinancing your mortgage to lower your interest rate and/or reduce your repayment period



HEALTH

- Skip the gym membership & exercise at the park or in your neighborhood for free www.cancer.org/healthy/toolsandcalculators/calculators/app/exercise-counts-calculator
- Buy store brand over-the-counter medication at 20%-40% less than brand names
- If approved by your doctor, switch to generic prescriptions to reduce your costs
- Quit smoking to improve your health and increase your savings account www.smokefree.gov



SHOPPING

- Get free giveaways from your neighbors www.freecycle.org
- Visit the library to find thousands of books, CDs, DVDs, etc. at no cost—most libraries even have free digital content www.publiclibraries.com
- Cancel unused magazine subscriptions and unused gym and other club memberships
- Shop out of season to get good discounts (especially for holiday decorations, clothing & appliances)—buy goods when they are not in demand
- Take advantage of discounts & incentive programs provided by your employer, bank & wholesaler (Costco or Sam's Club)—many offer discounted rates on cell service, area attractions, insurance & more
- Shop online to compare prices & save gas—many sites offer free shipping
- Before you renew your auto & homeowners insurance, get quotes from other companies—visit your state's insurance website for more information
- Reduce your cell phone costs—understand peak calling periods, data overage charges, area coverage, roaming, and termination charges
- Avoid paying for duplicate services, like a cellphone and a landline



FOOD

- Bring your lunch to work to save money and improve your diet
- Eat healthy on a budget with tips from www.choosemyplate.gov
- Statistics show that those who shop with a grocery list spend less—use a digital version for convenience
- Use these saving strategies to spend less www.livingwellspendingless.com/2012/11/01/how-to-save-on-food/



FINANCE

- Avoid using ATMs that charge fees
- Pay attention to overdraft fees www.fdic.gov/consumers/overdraft
- Prepare your own taxes with free online software www.irs.gov/freefile
- Pay your bills on time to avoid late fees and a negative impact on your credit score
- Keep track of what your credit reports say about you www.annualcreditreport.com
- Save your change—or use a spend-to-save program like BOA's Keep the Change that rounds up your purchases to the nearest dollar and deposits the change into your savings account www.bankofamerica.com
- Set up a budget and monitor it—some websites have built-in tracking to make it even easier www.mint.com
- Increase your income with an extra job or freelance work www.consumer.ftc.gov/topics/jobs-making-money



EDUCATION

- Apply for as many scholarships & grants as possible www.fafsa.ed.gov
- Sign up for an education matching account—every time you make a purchase, the retailers will contribute a portion of the purchase price to an education savings account you can use to invest, pay student loans or educational expenses www.upromise.com



TRANSPORTATION

- Get regularly scheduled maintenance to save money on preventable, costly repairs <http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/main.tain.shtml>
- Making sure your tires are inflated to the proper tire pressure can save \$100/year in gas
- Stick to the speed limit to maximize fuel efficiency and avoid speeding tickets
- View more gas mileage tips at www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/driveHabits.jsp
- Shop for lower gas prices www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/gasprices/s.tates
- Use the lowest octane recommended by your owner's manual
- Drive less
- Carpool to save money on gas and help the environment
- Ride your bike more—even to work <https://www.active.com/cycling/articles/13-tips-for-your-first-bike-commute>
- Use public transit instead of hailing a cab



ENTERTAINMENT

- Research free or inexpensive entertainment in your community
- Give up cable (or at least premium cable) and watch TV online for free
- Socialize at pot-luck meals rather than restaurants
- Attend high school sporting events instead of professional ones to save on admission



TRAVEL

- Take a staycation—avoiding costly hotels and airfare—to an area attraction, campsite or state park
- Visit a nearby national park www.nps.gov
- Check multiple websites for best the airfare or try discount carriers like www.iflyswa.com
- Use the internet to find deals on vacation packages www.travelzoo.com
- Use the internet to find the best priced hotel rooms or name your own price www.priceline.com

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