

## **Twenty Ways to Save More Each Month -**

Taken from "Twenty-Five Ways to Save More Each Month" – Business Week and "My Money Saving Tips" – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ([www.health.gov](http://www.health.gov))

- 1 – **Don't shop hungry** – eat something healthy before going to the store. Chances are your purchases will increase with the amount of hunger that you are experiencing.
- 2 – **Make a list of meal ideas** - Before going to the store make a list of meal ideas for the coming week. Keep in mind the days you'll have time to cook from scratch and the days you'll be pressed for time. Then, make a grocery list and stick to it.
- 3 – **Review store ads** (many which are now on-line). Also, clip coupons and organize them at home.
- 4 – **Track every expense** – Financial advisors say the best way to control your spending is to know precisely where all of your cash is going each month. There are several options: make a budget; keep a spreadsheet of all spending; or buy a computer program designed to help manage your finances.
- 5 – **Cut back on the eating out** – Food is a daily expense that can add up quickly over time, so office workers can save a lot just by bringing their lunches to work rather than buying every day. Meals eaten at home almost always cost less than evenings out, even at more casual restaurants.
- 6 – **Try store brands** - Store brand products are often made by the same manufacturers as the brand-name items. Also the most costly brands are often placed at eye-level while the store brands that may be cheaper and just as good are often placed higher or lower on the grocery shelves.
- 7 – **Look for the unit price to compare similar foods** – Many stores now have the unit price on the price sticker on the shelf on which the item is sitting. This tells you the cost per ounce, pound or pint so you'll know which brand or size is the best to buy. Don't get fooled to think that the jumbo size is always the best buy – make sure you check the unit price first.
- 8 – **Cut utility bills, especially electricity** – Experts are full of advice on lowering electricity and heating bills; Buy efficient light bulbs; lower the thermostat; turn off the air conditioning whenever possible; turn off the lights and unplug appliances when not needed.
- 9 – **Examine your phone service** – Do you need both a landline (house phone) and a mobile or cell phone? If you have a cell phone, do you need long-distance service on your home phone? Canceling one line could mean one less bill every month. Many people have phone packages that are too expensive for their needs, so read your bill carefully.
- 10 – **Annualize your expenses** – When reviewing your spending habits, roughly calculate how much they're costing you over the course of a year. "Realizing how much things cost over the course of a year can really help put things into perspective," says Bob Nusbaum of Middle America Planning in Pittsburg. For example, if you spend \$10 for snacks and lunch each weekday, that adds up to \$2,500 in a year.
- 11 – **Institute a Waiting Period for Major Purchases** – Wait at least 48 hours before deciding to buy anything over a certain price limit - \$50 for example. After the waiting period is over, "You may decide that the object desired really isn't worth the price," says Jennifer Hartman of Greenleaf Financial Group in Los Angeles.
- 12 – **Purchase canned (in water or in their own juice, not heavy syrup) and frozen fruits and vegetables** – They're healthy too and they will last longer.
- 13 – **The whole may be cheaper than the parts** – buy a whole chicken and cut it into pieces at home instead of buying pre-cut chicken (breasts, legs, and wings) that may be more expensive.
- 14 – **Stock up on sale items you can use in a timely manner** – Buy in bulk for quality and value, but serve healthy portions.

15 – **Use your food budget wisely** – For the price of a large bag of chip and a box of cookies, you can buy a lot of apples, bananas, carrots, potatoes, peppers and other healthier foods.

16 – **Pay Bills Online – Save on Stamps, Avoid Late Fees** – Set up your finances so bills are paid automatically or online at the click of a mouse. “There’s no reason to pay for stamps and envelopes and run the risk of a late payment fee when bill pay programs are usually free,” says Walt Mozdzer of Syverson Strege & Co.

17 – **Buy Generic Drugs** – If you take prescription drugs, ask your pharmacist if a cheaper, generic version is available.

18 – **Buy used** – Cars, books, furniture, and even clothing can be bought used for a fraction of their original cost. New cars in particular often aren’t worth the extra cost; a lightly used vehicle can save you thousands of dollars with little or no extra maintenance expenses.

19 – **Do “batch cooking” when the food budget and time allow.** Cook a large amount of spaghetti sauce, divide it into family-sized portions, and freeze them promptly for meals later in the month.

20 – **Take advantage of planned leftovers to cut the preparation time and save food dollars.** For example, prepare a roast, serve half of it and freeze the remaining half to use later with vegetables for a quick soup or in other dishes.