

Step 3: Know your income and expenses.

Step 4: Live by a spending plan.

What can you do to increase income?

- Sell things on Craigslist, EBay.
- Garage sale
- Consignment shops
- Downsize car, house
- Sell toys
- Second job (pizza, Wal-Mart, waitress)
- Home based business (cookies, cakes, mow lawns)
- Get kids involved; help them see it is the family household budget.
- Other ideas: _____

What can you do to spend less?

Clothing:

- Shop thrift and surplus stores.
- Buy dual-purpose clothing. Mix and match for greater savings and more combinations.
- Stay away from trendy fashions.
- Buy wash and wear—dry cleaning is expensive.
- Buy on sale.
- Avoid impulse buying—practice sales resistance.
- Don't always believe that high price mean good quality.

Groceries:

- Use coupons. Go on double coupon day.
- Buy the generic or store brands.
- Buy in bulk.
- Don't shop when you are hungry.
- Take a list and stick to it.
- Plan menus for several days and plan meals from the leftovers.
- Avoid prepared meals.
- Freeze food.
- Make your own baby food.
- Leave the kids at home.
- Shop when you are in a hurry!
- Look at expiration dates on food before you buy.
- Avoid vending machines and purchasing bottled water.

Entertainment:

- Discount coupon books.
- Half-price web sites.
- Discount radio show tickets

- Groupon
- Area appreciation days for Branson shows.
- Entertain at home. Consider potlucks to share costs.
- If you go to the movie theater, rent movies at home.
- If you rent movies at home, find cheaper alternatives to PPV (Netflix, Redbox, Hulu).
- Pack a lunch or cooler when going to the park, ballgame, soccer practice, waterpark or Silver Dollar City.
- Check memberships (AAA, AARP, Sam's Club, credit cards) for other discount offers.
- Cancel magazine and newspaper subscriptions. Go to library or read online.
- Have a family game night with kids.
- Spend more time outside at nature parks, bike paths, or neighborhood. Make exercise a family event.
- Check local library for free events and ideas for kids.
- Visit zoos and museums. (Are there any free ones nearby?)
- Go to open houses to get decorating ideas and free food.

Eating Out:

- Eat out less often!
- Cook at home—make it a family event, and involve kids.
- Discount coupon books.
- Half-price web sites.
- Discount radio show tickets

- Groupon
- Kids eat free nights
- Share meals.
- Eat from appetizer list.
- Order from lunch menu or early bird hours.
- Skip the soda and order water.
- Take leftover's home.
- Check out restaurant website for coupons before going.
- Sign up for email specials and get free meals on birthday.
- Skip Starbucks and make your own coffee.
- Take your lunch to work.

Gas:

- Get rid of the gas guzzler.
- Slow down to 55 mph.
- Drive at steady rate, and avoid quick acceleration.
- Maintain proper tire pressure, fluids and other maintenance.
- Carpool.
- Consolidate your errands.
- Get regular tune-ups.
- Don't idle for longer than 1 minute.

Utilities:

- Cancel home phone, if you have cell phone.
- Downsize or cancel internet, cable, pay per view, Netflix.
- Review bills and question line items on phone bills, credit cards, cable, cell phone
- Unplug electrical items to conserve energy.
- Use low watt lighting.

Banking and Credit Cards:

- Balance your checkbook
- Pay your bills on time and avoid late fees.
- Get overdraft protection on checking account.
- Pay cash and avoid financing deals—even no interest for xx days!
- Avoid foreign ATM fees.
- Use online banking to make payments automatically and on-time.
- Obtain credit cards without annual fee.
- Use a cash-back or other rewards credit cards.

- Find a credit card with lower interest rates. (But try to pay off credit card each month!)
- Get out of credit card debt ASAP. Use debt snowball.

Christmas:

- Trim down the list of people you buy for.
- Make your own gifts.
- Give the gift of "time"—serve instead of giving gifts.
- Use artificial tree instead of real.
- Reduce the number of parties or opt for pot-luck events.
- Start a Christmas Club account and use only cash to purchase gifts. Stick to a limit.
- Plan ahead and shop online for discounts.
- Take a family vacation instead of buying gifts. Could be real savings!

Insurance:

- Shop for insurance. Ask for multi discounts (home and auto).
- Increase deductibles.
- Include insurance costs when comparing cars to purchase.
- Clean up your credit for better insurance rates.
- Drive slower and smarter. Maintain a clean driving record.
- Stop habits that raise insurance rates: smoking, riding motorcycles, speeding tickets.

Other ideas:

- Increase credit score for better rates (but only on house. Don't buy unless you have cash!
- Refinance your house—ask for help if you aren't sure if it is worthwhile.
- Reduce your annual refund to increase margin each month and reduce any consumer credit.
- Use plastic grocery sacks for garbage bags, and lunch bags.
- Go to library instead of buying books.
- If you buy books, buy used.
- Price check before buying any major purchase.
- Wait 3 days before any major purchase.
- Plan vacations ahead of time, including total expenses.
- Keep your distance from lavish, high-rolling friends.