

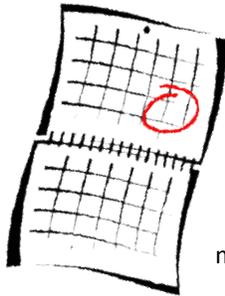
Budgeting and Saving Action Plan

Trying to save money for next week, next month, or next year?
Get organized and start saving today with the following steps?

Step 1: Assess Your Situation What methods do you use to manage your money? Are you satisfied with your money management system at the end of the month? Why or why not?

Step 2: Track Your Spending Track your spending based on what you REALLY spend. This means you should include expenses even if you think that it is a “one-time” or infrequent expense. Use a method of tracking that will fit easily into your life; some people like to track expenses in a journal that keep handy, while others might prefer to use a spreadsheet on the computer.

- Use the **Daily Expense Tracking** worksheet to get started and see if you like it.
- Look for trends. Are there some days that you spend more than others? Are you surprised by how much your small purchases add up?
- Identify spending leaks (coffee, etc) and “risky” categories where your spending gets out of control.



Step 3: Get Organized! Get organized and get your whole household involved in managing your finances. Create a central place in your home where you keep bills, your checkbook, etc. Ask your family members to help out by keeping track of upcoming expenses on a calendar. Use the **Budget Worksheet or Paycheck Planner** to map out your income and expenses from month to month or paycheck to paycheck. Continue to refer back to your budget in order to make it more realistic.

Step 4: What are my Budget Busters?

Review your Paycheck Planner, your Budget and the expense tracking that you have done. What are your budget busters, or things that are in the way of your financial goals? These might include:

Unneeded services on your cell phone bill

Spending Leaks: candy bars, coffee, ATM fees, and other small expenses you often forget in your budget.

Fluctuating expenses that are hard to keep track of

Fees/Late Charges that can be avoided

Impulse buys



List your top three budget busters and how you might change your spending habits to avoid them:

Budget Buster #1:	Solution:
Budget Buster #2:	Solution:
Budget Buster #3:	Solution:

Step 5: Every Bit Counts!

IF YOU SAVE.....PER WEEK IT ADDS UP!!!

Weekly	3 Months	6 Months	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
\$ 5	\$ 60	\$ 120	\$ 240	\$ 720	\$ 1,200
\$ 10	\$ 120	\$ 240	\$ 480	\$ 1,440	\$ 2,400
\$ 15	\$ 180	\$ 360	\$ 720	\$ 2,160	\$ 3,600
\$ 20	\$ 240	\$ 480	\$ 960	\$ 2,880	\$ 4,800
\$ 25	\$ 300	\$ 600	\$ 1,200	\$ 3,600	\$ 6,000
\$ 30	\$ 360	\$ 720	\$ 1,440	\$ 4,320	\$ 7,200
\$ 35	\$ 420	\$ 840	\$ 1,680	\$ 5,040	\$ 8,400
\$ 40	\$ 480	\$ 960	\$ 1,920	\$ 5,760	\$ 9,600
\$ 45	\$ 540	\$ 1,080	\$ 2,160	\$ 6,480	\$ 10,800
\$ 50	\$ 600	\$ 1,200	\$ 2,400	\$ 7,200	\$ 12,000

Right now, I am able to save _____ per week. By next year, I will plan to save _____ per week.

Step 6: Make a Plan

When you understand where you are today and what you want to accomplish in the future, you can create a plan to get there. Identifying long- and short-term goals is the first step. Even goals that don't have a direct relationship to money usually require some financial planning. Your goals should be...

Specific— Be careful not to set too broad a goal as that will make it difficult to measure success.

Measurable—“I want to save \$500” instead of “I want to save some money”

Actionable— Establish goals that you can take steps toward achieving now.

Reasonable— Steps towards these goals can be easily incorporated into your life.

Time-based— Goals are based on achievable and specific time-frames.

List your Short and Long Term Goals:

SHORT TERM GOALS (These are smaller goals that you feel you can reach in the next year or two.)	TARGET DATE
1.	
2.	
3.	
LONG TERM GOALS (These are goals that require preparation now even though it may be several years before you achieve them.)	TARGET DATE
1.	
2.	
3.	

Goal Planning

Once you establish your goals, create plans to accomplish them. Reaching a financial goal often requires more than just saving money. Sometimes you must change your saving and spending habits, increase your income, repair your credit, etc. Some goals might seem intimidating or may take a long time to achieve, but don't give up! Plan small, reachable steps. Each step is a success and brings you closer to your ultimate goal.

Be sure to prioritize your goals. Meeting one goal may force you to postpone another. Say you want both a new car and to own your own home. You may be able to acquire a new car sooner but the payments will lessen the amount of money you can save and lower the amount of money a bank will lend you for a house.

Choose the goal you most want to reach, and create a plan to help you meet your objective. If you are unsure about the actions required to meet your goal, research will be one of your steps.

My Goal is

to: _____

I will take the following steps to reach my goal by _____

<u>Step</u>	<u>Target Date</u>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

Step 7: Take Action

- Continue to track spending and adjust your budget accordingly.
- Remind yourself of the goals that you are working towards; take a step every week that gets you closer to your goal.
- Find a friend, family member or a financial coach to help you stay on track.
- Continue to actively find ways to save money. Put the money that you save from opting out of a coffee into an emergency savings account!
- Pay yourself first- practice saving as if it was a bill that you pay at the beginning of every month.
- Remember: EVERY BIT COUNTS!

