

TIPS TO START SAVING

Submitted by Land of Lincoln Credit Union

1. DO A PENNY CHALLENGE. On day one, put a single penny into the jar. On day two, put in two pennies. Continue this practice for a year (putting \$3.65 in on the last day), and you'll have \$667.95! If you want to kick things up a notch...DO A DOLLAR CHALLENGE instead of pennies.

2. MONTHLY GIFT CARD FOR CHRISTMAS. Every paycheck, buy one gift card and set it aside. Use it as a Christmas present when the holidays roll around and your pocketbook won't take such a hit at Christmastime. You can easily get Amazon gift cards from the grocery store (or online). If you can swing an extra \$25/month for the gift cards, you'll have \$300 taken care of come December.

3. PAY SOMETHING OFF...MOVE THE PAYMENT TO THE NEXT DEBT. People tend to think once they've paid off a debt (i.e. – a car loan) that this is now extra spending money. But don't even acknowledge that you have it, move it to what you pay on your mortgage or credit card and pay those off faster!

4. USE THE ENVELOPE BUDGET METHOD. If you've spent much time researching money-saving tips, you've probably come across this method before. The idea is to take cash out from the bank and split it into envelopes that are labeled for specific uses – (i.e. – dining out, gas, groceries, etc.). We all know how easy it is to swipe your card to spend money, but the act of paying cash keeps you on budget. When it's gone for the month – it's gone.

5. TRY THE “NO-SPEND MONTH” CHALLENGE. This is going to look a little different for every person who tries it. Obviously, you need to pay your bills and you probably need to buy food to eat, but do you think you can resist spending money on unnecessary items for an entire month? Give it a try! It's just 30 days! Take it a step further for a learning experience, write down every item that you find yourself wanting to buy throughout the month. At the end of the 30 days, revisit your list. You'll probably be surprised by some of the things on there and realize you don't actually want them at all.

6. SET UP AN AUTO DEPOSIT INTO YOUR SAVINGS ACCOUNT. Several banks offer a service that deposits a dollar to your savings account every time you swipe your debit card for a purchase. That's another thing that — for most people — won't hurt much in the moment, and will add up in the long run. Some banks even waive savings account fees if you opt in to this service.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ Spread holiday spending throughout the year.
- ◆ After paying off a debt use that extra money to pay off another debt.
- ◆ Get creative with budgeting strategies.
- ◆ Challenge yourself to cut unnecessary spending.
- ◆ Set up auto deposits for savings.