

## **How to Manage Money Without a Budget**

If the thought of setting up a budget makes you cringe, consider the alternatives. There are ways to manage your money effectively without a spreadsheet.

Without the definitive limits of a budget, you'll still need to set boundaries so your spending doesn't exceed your income. And you'll have to remain mindful about the difference between wants and needs.

Here are some alternative strategies for managing money effectively.

### **Stay on top of monthly bills**

To monitor monthly bills, it's helpful to take advantage of the online banking services of an institution like Cornerstone Community Financial Credit Union and set up [automatic payments](#) for recurring charges.

### **Spend responsibly**

This doesn't mean you can't splurge every once in a while, but you can't have everything you want. Decide what matters most and say no to the rest. And, before each major purchase, be sure to evaluate your account balance to determine if you can afford it.

It's especially important to check balances regularly to maintain your financial health when going budgetless – [set alerts](#) to automatically send updates to your email or mobile device when you make large withdrawals, to remind you when payments are due, or when your balance gets too low.

### **Set saving goals**

[Creating](#) clear long- and short-term goals, and planning ways to reach them, can be every bit as effective in helping you managing your income as budgeting. List major upcoming goals, along with the cost of each and what it'll take to save that amount. For example, if the smartphone you'd like costs \$500, saving just \$50 a month could get you that phone in only 10 months.

### **Save automatically**

If setting aside a chunk of your income is challenging, set up an automatic savings plan, so the process is a no-brainer. You can send a pre-determined portion of your paycheck directly into your savings account, or transfer money from your checking account.

Another effortless way to save is by opening a rewards-type checking account that gives you a percentage of what you spend on your debit card. [Spend-to-save programs](#) can also be a smart

option, rounding up each debit card purchase and automatically depositing the difference into your savings account. Some of these accounts also include a quarterly funds match payment.

### **Trick yourself into saving**

Instead of obsessively monitoring every penny, mentally round down every deposit you make and round up every expense. Not only will you start to build a savings cushion, you'll also enjoy the pleasant surprise of "found money" when you do periodically check your balances.

As long as you're monitoring finances and making necessary adjustments, you'll find it truly is possible to manage money wisely without adopting a formal budget.

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