

MONEY HACKS

Smart ways to cut down your budget and control monstrous credit card debt.

1. Day of the Living No-Spend

Pick one day each month where you commit to not spending any money.

Plan ahead to buy groceries, find free activities and avoid malls and shopping plazas.

2. Question Everything

Review each service you use to see if you need it or if it overlaps something else.

Narrow down your streaming services, cable packages and subscriptions regularly.

3. Send It Back from Whence It Came

Apply the 30-day rule for large purchases to make sure you still want and need the item.

If you make spontaneous purchases, take 30 days to see if you still care or send it back.

4. One of Us

Sign up for customer loyalty programs with your favorite retailers to save big.

Then keep a running list of items you need so you can grab them when they go on sale.

5. Upgrade and Thrive

But never book your upgrades!

Only ask at the time when you arrive for free scores.

This can work for rental car upgrades and to get premium hotel rooms on the spot.

6. Never Let Them Take You by Surprise

Carry around \$100 so you can always pay for incidental purchases with cash.

Then carry bigger bills that are harder to break to prevent cash overspending.

7. Avoid Feeding Frenzies

High credit card APR can be a killer, so call your creditors to reduce your interest rates.

If you can't get your rates reduced yourself, see if you qualify for a Debt Management Plan.

8. Get a Little Help from Your Friends

Set up lending networks with friends and family so you can swap items you don't use.

You can exchange books, clothes, toys and more. Just send an email or group text to switch.

9. Isolate to Stay Safe

Open a checking account just for bills where you transfer money only to cover obligations.

This helps you avoid overspending and missing crucial payments because you lacked funds.

10. Always Focus on Fighting the Principal

It's the source of your problems, so take extra steps to target principal debt more effectively.

If you make larger or extra payments each month, you fight to directly to decrease the principal debt you owe.

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