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# 40 WAYS

TO SAVE WHEN YOU'RE TERRIBLE AT SAVING





# 40 Ways to Save When You're Terrible at Saving

Let us be honest with you: some of us used to be terrible at saving money. We knew we had to save for the future and knew the importance of having that extra money there for those unforeseeable circumstances, but couldn't seem to put money aside. We'd get sidetracked each month with things we just had to have now or we'd see the "extra spending money" sitting in our checking account, so our savings account would never grow.

The good thing about being terrible at saving is that it's easier to find extra ways to save money that you would usually spend. We've found plenty of ways to save money on shopping, food, entertainment and even monthly bills! Even if you absolutely can't set aside extra money each month, this book will give you ways to save some extra money in almost every part of your life.

# Saving Through Organization

## 1. Start a Budget

If you want to get started on the right track, getting yourself on a budget is the first thing you should do. [Talk to a credit counselor](#) or start one yourself by using [our budget worksheet](#). You can see how much your necessities cost and how much money you have leftover at the end of each month to put aside.



## 2. Track Your Spending

Do you use your checkbook or a checkbook app to track your daily, weekly and monthly spending? It might take a little extra time out of your day to track your spending, but it is well worth the effort! Over time, you can start to see where you waste your money and start cutting back. You'd be amazed to see how much those \$4 trips to your favorite coffee shop actually cost you each year!

## 3. Separate Savings and Checking Accounts

Seeing money in your savings account can make you think it's available to spend. This makes it hard to keep money in there if you leave it linked to your checking account to easily transfer. Try setting up a separate savings account at a different credit union or bank to make it harder to take money out of it. That'll have you second-guessing some of those purchases that you don't really need.

## 4. Set a Savings Goal

Don't you love setting and achieving goals for yourself? It's a great feeling to meet and even exceed your own expectations. Set yourself a savings goal, like having \$5,000 in your savings account, saving up to buy a new car with cash or putting a down payment on a house. Setting your own goals will help you to visualize your money for the future.

## 5. Pay Yourself First

Who doesn't like getting paid? After your bills are paid for, the next thing you should do is pay yourself! Deposit some money into your savings account each month and budget the rest of your money for non-necessities. This will make you rethink how you use and budget your money.



## 6. Set Up Automatic Deposits

If you'd like to start saving more and not have to think about it, setting up automatic deposits is the right choice for you. If your budget is set and you want to save money without having to make an effort to do it, set it up to go into your savings automatically. Then you'll watch your savings account grow on its own!

## 7. Start a Change Jar

We all end up using cash at some point, but sometimes we just toss the change aside, tell the cashiers to "keep the change" or end up dropping it on the ground. Some people even throw their change in the trash! They're literally throwing money away! To save some extra money, start a change jar in your house where you drop your coins. Bring the change to your financial institution for some extra money in your savings account.

# Saving on Shopping

## 8. Replace Your “Fun Shopping Hobby”

We’ve all experienced a boredom that can only be made better by a trip to the mall. It’s one of the most expensive hobbies out there (for those of us on a budget, at least). Find something fun to do that doesn’t focus on going out and spending your hard-earned money. Replace your shopping hobby and your checking account will thank you.

## 9. Try Shopping at Outlet Centers

Don’t you hate it when you really want to buy a new pair of shoes, but it’s almost \$200 and you know that money could be put to better use elsewhere? Us, too. Instead of spending over \$200 for that pair of shoes, head over to an outlet center. You’ve got a pretty good chance at finding that pair or one even better for just a fraction of the price! If you were willing to pay the full amount in the first place, you can put the difference into your savings account.

## 10. Shop on Clearance

Looking for a new frying pan or curtain set, but don’t want to pay full price? Take a trip down the clearance aisle! Most of these items are there because of overstock or simply because they haven’t been able to sell them, which means you get to save money on your purchase! You can regularly save up to 80% off on clearance items, which is money you can set aside!



## 11. Set Up an Automatic Christmas Budget

Instead of waiting until the last minute to do your Christmas shopping, which can cause you to spend way more than you expected, try setting up a Christmas budget. Get a [Christmas Club](#) account and set your budget to have your funds automatically



transferred to this account each month. Once it's released to you in November, you can start shopping early and on a budget!

## 12. Switch to a Rewards Card

Do you get money back with your credit card? If not, take the time to get a card that does. Having a rewards card, like the [Pelican Points credit card](#), lets you earn points for your purchases and redeem them for cash back or other rewards! Without a rewards card, you're just paying for things without getting anything extra in return.

## 13. Set Up Deal Alerts for Big Purchases

That big screen TV or state of the art grill may be calling your name, but you should really consider putting them on hold. There are a number of deal alert websites and apps out there where you can put the type of purchase you're looking to make and set it up to email you when it hits your price point! This will help you make less impulsive purchases and save you money in the long run.

## 14. Get Cash Back on Purchases

Does your checking account pay you for purchases you make every month? If not, it might be time to consider changing how you bank. Some accounts, like [Pelican's free Kasasa Cash Back](#) checking account, will reward you for doing banking basics like using your debit card and using eStatements! When you get cash back on your purchases, it's like you're getting paid to buy things you were already going to buy!



# Saving on Food

## 15. Start a Meal Plan

Tired of being confused about what you're going to eat for dinner? Start a meal plan! Not only will this help keep your breakfasts, lunches and dinners scheduled for the week, but you'll also have a specific grocery list for your next shopping trip! Sticking to your meal plan will help you save money on your groceries! That will free up extra money for your savings account!

## 16. Brown Bag Your Lunch

Grabbing lunch with your co-workers is a lot of fun, but it can also be a very expensive habit when it becomes a normal routine. \$15-\$20 per week adds up to almost \$1,000 a year on going out to eat. If you're looking to save some extra money, see if your co-workers would want to brown bag lunch outside the workplace by going to a local park together. This way, you still get that much-needed time away from the office with your friends while saving money on your lunch break!

## 17. Switch to a Water Filter

If you're like most people, you go through a couple of cases of water each month. Instead of spending money on all of those cases of water, buy a water filter instead! If your family of four drinks eight glasses of water per day, you're probably spending a couple thousand dollars every year, whereas a water filter would cost you a little over \$100. That's a lot of savings on something you already pay for!



## 18. Eat Before Your Grocery Trip

Have you ever noticed that you buy a lot more food at the grocery store when you're hungry? That's because you end up buying a lot more "now" foods or foods you wouldn't normally get but would

definitely eat right now. If you eat before you go grocery shopping, you're much less likely to grab extra food and snacks while you're there, saving you from wasting your money.

## 19. Make Your Coffee or Tea at Home

The average American spends \$21 per week on coffee and tea as part of their daily routine. Those \$4 lattes add up pretty quickly and can total over \$1,000 per year! By making your coffee or tea at home, you can be saving some serious extra money in your savings account!

## 20. Forget the Fast Food

Fast food is relatively cheap, readily available and a welcomed dinner savior for parents on the go. It can be hard to say no on those weeks where you just can't seem to gather up the energy or patience for a home-cooked meal. Most families are spending hundreds per month on fast food meals. Take the extra time to cook the food you already bought on your grocery trip and you'll not only be saving your money, but you'll be healthier as well.



## 21. Start a Garden

Gardening can be an extremely relaxing and rewarding hobby. It's also a hobby that pays you back! Seeds will cost you anywhere from \$0.50-\$2.50 per pack, but you can haul 20 or more pounds of fruits and vegetables for each plant! You'll be saving money on your groceries and you can feel great knowing you grew it yourself!

## 22. Cook More Meals from Scratch

Did you know that many convenient boxed and freezer meals actually cost you much more than you'd pay to cook the meal from scratch? Instead of paying \$2.50 for a small box of mashed potato flakes, grab a five pound bag for the same price! This will make a large pot of food, and you'll have enough to freeze. On top of the money



you're saving, you'll also be eating a lot healthier by adding fresh fruit and veggies to your diet!

### **23. Get Creative With Leftovers**

A lot of us never enjoyed leftovers as a kid and that followed us into life as an adult. In an effort to be able to save more money, we must get pretty creative with leftover food. Leftover turkey or chicken works great in fried rice, gumbo or spaghetti! Leftover roast from Sunday's lunch makes amazing open-faced sandwiches the next night, too! Getting in this creative mindset will help you reuse food that would have been thrown out and give you an extra meal, which means more money for your savings account!

### **24. Grocery Shop by Yourself**

Some of us rarely ever stick to a shopping list when shopping with a partner, but when we shop by ourselves we're in and out in no time. If you can't go shopping by yourself, split up the grocery list and shop separately!

### **25. Don't Forget the Coupons**

Have you ever gotten a coupon in the mail and said, "Who cares about saving 40 cents?!" Well, we should care more about those small savings. Each of those separate coupons can add up over time, saving you hundreds of dollars each year on groceries you were going to buy anyway!



### **26. Get Rid of Paper Towels**

Here's a bit of truth for you: paper towels are addicting. We use them to wash our hands, clean up spills and just about everything else. The sad part is that we know we could be using a cloth towel instead. The average household uses 2-3 rolls a week, spending up to \$300 a year for paper towels! Switching to from paper to cloth towels can save you up to \$1,500 in five years!

# Saving on Entertainment

## 27. Switch to Slower Internet

You'd be surprised to know that your internet speed isn't that fast even though you're on the "Blazingly-Fast Internet" package. The download and upload speeds they claim are based off of the maximum speed they've seen, not how fast your internet is going to be. By switching to a slower package, you probably won't notice a difference.

## 28. Get DVDs from the Library

Can't get enough of your favorite drama? Instead of spending extra money buying DVDs or renting them from a kiosk, check out what your library has to offer. Many have a variety of new and old favorites, including movies and TV show seasons!

## 29. Read Magazines at the Library

Whether you're paying for a subscription or buying the issues at the grocery store, magazines are an unnecessary spend! Libraries offer free access to hundreds of magazines for card holders to read. Check out your library to see about accessing digital versions, too! You won't even need to leave your house to read your favorite publication.

## 30. Eliminate Some of Your Cable

How many of those hundreds of channels do you actually watch? See if your cable provider offers a package with less channels. You won't really miss the channels you didn't watch, and you'll be saving hundreds each year on your cable bill! After all, do you really need 50 different sports channels?





## **31. Take Advantage of Discount Days**

Take a look at the websites for your local zoo, aquarium and movie theater. Many of these places will have individual and family discount days coming up for you to go out and have a good time. Many places also offer bulk ticket discounts or season passes that will let you have a lot of fun for a lot less!

## **32. Buy Pre-Owned When Possible**

Buying brand new games and movies is great, until you realize you are paying a lot of extra money just to get a sealed copy of the same disc. Instead of \$30 per movie and \$60 per game, pre-owned copies can be 50% cheaper or less for essentially the same item! Switching to pre-owned copies can save you a good deal of money on your entertainment each month.

# Saving on Monthly Bills

## 33. Shop for Better Rates

We've all seen the commercials claiming that we could be saving 20% or more on our insurance rates, but have you ever considered shopping around for the best rate? Use an insurance comparison tool like the one on NerdWallet.com to see if you could be saving money on your monthly payment.

## 34. Get Rid of Checking Account Fees

You're probably paying fees each month for having a checking account at your bank or financial institution. Switch your checking account to a credit union for no-fee banking. Many credit unions, including Pelican, have no-fee checking accounts that pay higher interest! To top it off, they'll pay you dividends just for being a member!



## 35. Change Your Transportation

Instead of starting up your car to drive around the corner, consider walking or riding a bike. Not only will you be saving money on gas and normal vehicle wear, you'll also be healthier, which can lead to less money spent on health-related issues.

## 36. Change Your Lights

What kind of lightbulbs do you use? Chances are good that you're using incandescent light bulbs, which use most of their energy to give off heat instead of light. By switching your light bulbs to new energy-saving LED bulbs, you could be saving over \$75 each year on your electricity! Plus, the newer light bulbs last longer, so you'll be replacing them less often! All of this extra money can help pad your already-growing savings account.



## 37. Learn to Do Minor Repairs

Many household repairs, like broken toilet levers, clogged drains and leaky pipes, are easy to do. Doing these yourself can save you time and money that may have been wasted by calling a plumber or handyman. Instead of paying them an arm and a leg to fix it, buy the parts yourself and fix it for a fraction of the cost.



## 38. Use the Dryer Less

Your dryer costs a good bit in electricity each year, and you don't even know it! If you find yourself doing 4-6 loads of clothes each week, you could be saving up to \$200 or more each year by hanging your clothes outside to dry! If you like how clothes feel using a dryer, try line-drying them until they're almost done and then tossing them in. You'll be happy with your monthly savings!

## 39. Reduce Your Phone Bill

How much are you paying for your phone bill? Probably too much if we had to guess. With the addition of smartphones and data plans, cell phone plans have gotten to be hundreds of dollars each month. Consider switching to a phone card or "pay as you go" plan. Check your plan and you'll probably see that you don't use near as many minutes or texts as you think. If you have Wi-Fi at your house and work, you probably are using a lot less data, too. Switching to a different plan can save you hundreds of dollars each month!

## 40. Unplug to Save

Most of your household devices are probably plugged into a power strip or directly into the wall while you're reading this. Did you know that even though they may be off, they're using electricity just by being plugged in? This is called phantom power and each device could be using up to \$1 of phantom power by simply being plugged in. It might not sound like much, but once you start counting the

blender, the toaster, the gaming console(s) and unused chargers, you can see just how expensive it can be to leave things plugged in. Turn off power strips or unplug unused devices to start saving some extra money each month.

Even if you can't seem to set aside money, using any of these tips can help you save lots of money each year! That's enough to start a nice little nest egg in your savings account. Use these 40 tips to help run your finances and stop letting them run you—even if you're terrible at saving.

**To learn more about Pelican State of Mind**

