

Counselors Often Can Help Save Thousands With Simple Spending Tips

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Many consumers develop spending habits that can lead to financial crisis; especially if a layoff, job loss, or other stress occurs in the family. Credit counselors can spot these spending patterns and suggest lifestyle changes that can make the difference between surviving a financial stress issue and folding under it.

Some examples of wasteful habits that can make a big difference are:

Buying coffee. Stopping for a cup every morning on the way to work or getting a special drink during a break can add up. It is easy to spend \$60 or \$70 a month on this habit alone. That could be \$1000 a year saved if you just made the coffee at home and took a thermos.

Bottled Water. Yes, it usually tastes better than tap water but \$1 a bottle versus less than one cent a bottle is a big difference. At these prices, it's a much better deal to buy a filter pitcher for \$20 and make your own. That can save as much as \$35 a month or more.

Paying Checking Account Fees. Many banks are now charging fees for having your money in a checking account. It may be time to look into a local bank or credit union that offers free checking. And that goes of free use of ATMs as well.

Cell phones. Look into low cost providers and hold a family meeting about curtailing texting and limiting phone usage until things improve. This can save hundreds each month.

Cable TV. It may be time to reduce the 300-channel service to basic cable and save \$40 or \$50 a month without too much sacrifice.

Brown Bag It. Carry your lunch to work or school. And prepare dinner at home instead of going out or even ordering in. It's a lot cheaper and can be better for you as well. A little extra work is worth it, especially when the savings can be huge.

Use the Library. It's free.

A typical family can save \$200 a month or more with some simple, common sense changes to spending habits. A counselor can help you make the adjustments and you will be surprised at the difference it can make.