

\$ Stretch Your Dollar \$

Stretch Your Dollar - General Spending Tips

1. Find the best buy. Look in several places – a catalog, newspapers, two or three stores, perhaps including a secondhand store, and garage sales. Spend time looking before you spend your money.
2. Use wisely. Make the things you buy last longer by taking proper care of them. See if you can find ways to make the clothes you buy wear longer and the food you buy keep from spoiling.
3. Substitute. When you go to buy something, ask yourself if a lower-priced item will do the job just as well. Use store brands and generics instead of name brands. Rent a video or DVD instead of taking the family to the movies.
4. Share it. Stretch resources by sharing with neighbors and friends. Chip in to buy larger amounts at lower unit prices (for example, a bushel of apples shared with four families); join car pools.
5. Find it free. There are some items that are available for free. Use public parks and playgrounds instead of expensive health clubs for exercise. Borrow books, records and videotapes from the library rather than buying them.
6. Rent or borrow it. When you need something for a short time, it could be cheaper to rent it than to buy it. Rented or borrowed items must be returned in good condition.
7. Trade or swap. Do you have things in your home that you no longer use? Can you trade them for things you need? Do you have talents or skills you could trade with your neighbors – can you trade time babysitting for help with home repairs?
8. Make it. Sometimes it's cheaper to make something than to buy it, but it means you must use your time and skills. Make sure the cost of materials is cheaper than buying the finished product.
9. Watch "phantom" money. Keep track of the money in your wallet. Cut back or cut out spending on snacks, phone calls, movies, magazines, eating out, CDs and DVDs. Stick to your shopping list and avoid impulse buys. You can use the *Expense Recordbook* MP306 to track phantom spending.
10. Don't buy it. Ask yourself if you really need this item or if there's something you want even more. Learn to say no to yourself, to your children, to salespeople and to things you feel pressured into buying. Doing without one item can help you get something else you want more. Don't go shopping just for fun.



References:

Shape Up Your Spending, FSHEC42. University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service. Prepared by Judith R. Urich, Ph.D., CFP™, retired Family Resource Management Specialist.

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