



Holiday Spending

Many people spend more money during the holiday season than at any other time of year. Unfortunately, credit cards are often used to supplement this extra spending, resulting in big bills in January.

If you would like to cut back on the amount you owe after the holidays, consider these steps:

- **Trim your gift list.** It's a simple formula: Buying fewer presents equals spending less money. Keep in mind that a few small gifts may be just as meaningful as one big-ticket item.
- **Stick to a budget.** Determine what you can afford to spend and how many gifts will fit into that budget. Avoid impulse buying.
- **Offer homemade gifts.** If you craft or have a creative hobby, consider making custom gifts. Offering a service, such as free babysitting or yard work, is another option.
- **Start early.** It may be easier to find bargains before the holiday shopping frenzy begins. In addition, online shopping is cheaper if you can take advantage of free or low-cost shipping.
- **Beware of add-on expenses.** While an extended warranty or service plan may sound sensible, the cost may sometimes match or even exceed the price of the item.



- **Look for bargains.** If you are looking for a specific item, comparison shop to find the best price. Keep in mind that this year's hot releases will be priced much higher than items that have been available for a year or more.
- **Keep receipts for all purchases.** This will help you track your spending. If you buy in store, ask for a gift receipt so the recipient can easily return or exchange the item if needed.
- **Avoid interest.** Paying in cash or paying off a credit card balance each month are two ways to avoid interest charges. If you can't clear a balance immediately, cut back on using credit until you've paid the debt.

For more suggestions on how to keep holiday spending from derailing your budget, contact LifeMatters. In addition, visit the Discount Center on mylifematters.com for discounted prices on many products and services.

1-800-367-7474

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