

# 10 Painless Ways to Save \$1,000

Whether you're in debt, making big plans, or just want a better quality of life, saving is essential. But going on a "dollar diet" won't work. Here are 10 ways to gain without pain.

Think about some ways to cut spending without cutting your quality of life.

Saving shouldn't be painful – if the steps you're taking negatively impact your life, you probably won't be able to maintain them. So don't go on a "dollar diet." Instead, find ways to save that are simple and fast and won't feel like deprivation.

And keep in mind that savings don't have to be big: Everything counts. So start with a goal and get going! Let's say you want to go for a \$1,000 gain with little or no pain. Let's recap the ideas from the video above and add more to the list...

## 1. Minimize your minutes

According to The New York Times, people use data more than voice on their phones these days. If you have more minutes than you need – especially if you have a rollover plan – consider downsizing to a more affordable and fitting amount. Comparison-shop at a site like BillShrink to check out the lowest price for the features and usage that suit you. Just enter some info about how you use your phone and what you want, and it'll give you some options and prices from different carriers.

**Savings: around \$200 a year if you can cut just \$17 out of the monthly bill.**

## 2. Bury the landline

Do you really need another phone these days? Maybe it's time to unplug that landline for good. If your cell phone isn't enough, there's Skype, Google Voice, or magicJack. The only downside to not having a landline is that 911 dispatchers may have difficulty tracing your cell phone call, but the FCC has implemented rules that will fix this over the next two years.

**Savings: Cut your \$25/month landline and you'll be \$300 a year richer.**

## 3. Work your way out of the gym membership

According to the International Health, Racquet, and Sportsclub Association, the average gym membership is about \$42/month. Instead, work out on your own. You can get some exercise videos online, or join a free site like Livestrong or SparkPeople to plan exercise activities, plus track your calories and diet. You can also look for free or cheap used exercise equipment on Craigslist or Freecycle.

**Savings: If you're paying the average membership fee, dropping it will buff up your savings by \$500 a year.**

## 4. Cut the cable

Data from Bundle.com puts the average cost of cable around \$50/month without premium channels. But check out our story You Don't Have to Pay for Cable TV. You can watch sports live online at ESPN3, and many of your favorite shows are either on Hulu or network websites. And for \$10/month, you can stream all you want from Netflix. You can also borrow movies free from your local library.

**Savings: depending on how much you cut, up to \$2,000 a year.**

## 5. Double your deductibles

Raising what you're willing to pay out of pocket on your insurance policies could lower your monthly cost substantially. A quick phone call to your insurance companies – home, health, and car – will tell you exactly how much, but expect to save 10 to 15 percent by raising your deductibles from \$250 to \$1,000.

Another way to save on insurance? Check out an insurance comparison site like ours and see if you're getting the best possible policy for the money. If you find a policy from a comparable-quality company with lower rates, call your insurance company, tell them about it, and see if they'll compete. If not, consider switching.

**Savings: If all you do is raise your deductibles, you should be able to save an easy \$200 a year.**

## **6. Take a vacation from high travel costs**

Staying local during your time off is one way to save big. Plan some weekend getaways and day trips instead of extended vacations – you'll get to see and do more, more often, for less. Take the chance to explore and look up things to do in your city on TripAdvisor. You'll sometimes get discounts as a local resident that tourists won't, too. But remember: Vacations are important to your quality of life. Don't cut them out, just do them for less.

If you decide to stick with longer, out-of-town vacations, at least see if you can get cheap or free lodging. See our stories [Best Hotel Price This Summer? \\$0](#) and [Vacation Houses at Hotel Room Prices](#).

**Savings: between travel, hotel, and ticket/rental costs, easily \$1,000.**

## **7. Save on food**

If you've got the space, try to stock up on nonperishable groceries at wholesale or when there are buy-one-get-one-free deals.

You get the best prices this way and make fewer trips to the store, which saves on gas.

We did a hugely popular story called [Saving With Salvage Groceries](#). Check it out for a list of salvage grocery stores that offer savings of up to 50 percent.

Another way to save is to buy groceries online: Amazon.com often has decent prices, and if you use their "subscribe and save" feature – which lets you set up a recurring order at a specified frequency that you can cancel any time – you can save an extra 15 percent. It also helps to use coupons, buy generics, and shop at dollar stores. (Check out [5 Great Deals at the Dollar Store](#) and [10 Dollar Store Duds](#).) And for even more ideas, see our story [28 Tasty Tips to Save on Food](#).

**Savings: \$300 or more a year.**

## **8. Save on clothes**

Clothes are something that can not only help you spend less – you can add to your bank account by selling the stuff you no longer use. Go through your closets and remove everything you haven't worn in a year. Now, take them all to a local consignment shop and put them up for sale. What they don't take, drop off at a charity store and get a tax deduction.

See if you can satisfy your current clothing needs by taking the money you make from the consignment shop and spending it there. For more ways to save, check out [18 Tips to Dress for Less](#).

**Savings: \$300 or more a year.**

## **9. Save on entertainment**

Keeping yourself amused for less isn't hard; it's a simple three-part process. First, decide what you like to do. Next, think about ways to do it for less. Then, do it as often as possible.

For example, if you like to meet your friends for cocktails, find the best happy-hour deal in town (and don't forget the free food!) If you like movies, get them free at the library. If you like to eat out, have an appetizer at home and split an entree – or eat at home and go out for a nice dessert. And always check out our [deals page](#) for current restaurant coupons and specials.

From picnics in the park to free plays at your local college to amateur sports – the world is full of low-cost ways to have fun. Check out 26 Tips to Save on Entertainment for more ideas.

**Savings: \$300 or more a year.**

## **10. Save on makeup**

In our news story 10 Tips to Save on Makeup, we interviewed a makeup artist who told us on camera that many of the items at Walgreens were just as good as their department store cousins at a fraction of the price. And shopping at the local discount drugstore or at a discount website is also more convenient.

You can get the last bit of mascara by heating it with your hair dryer or warm water. You can extend the life of your liquid foundation and concealer by using half as much and mixing it with a dab of facial lotion.

Source: Money Talks (<http://s.tt/13by1>)