

Find Savings as You Pivot Towards 2023



There are times when saving money seems far-fetched, such as going into the holidays or following that necessary but pricey purchase.

But that's often the perfect time to work on a plan to replenish your savings account. Sound improbable? Try these **3 steps toward savings**:

1. Start with a plan
2. Review your bills
3. Put your savings to work

Savings starts with a plan

When it comes to saving money, **creating a realistic budget** is a great place to start. But how much should you set aside for savings?

A great model to follow is called the **Spend, Save, Share**. This will help you direct your money where it should go. It's a blueprint for your income:

- Spend 70% on needs
- Save 25% for emergencies, retirement, and dreams
- Give 5% to support community

Not there yet? That's OK!

Every financial situation is different, and every journey begins right here, where you're at. **Set some SMART goals** for your savings. Even if it's a small amount, every penny, dime, and dollar saved is another step toward a more stable financial future.

If you are saving for a specific reason, make sure it is [S.M.A.R.T.](#) (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and has a time frame to be achieved.)

Specific

Having a clear goal can really help make the goal a reality. “Save money” is fine but making a goal to “Save 10% or \$100 each month” really helps to define it.

Measurable

Make a plan with achievable milestones. Milestones are a perfect opportunity for check-ins and progress updates. To see what is working well and what needs tweaking. It is also an important step that keeps you motivated towards the goal and doesn't let it fall off the radar.

Attainable

Be realistic. Goals should be challenging, but attainable.

Relevant

Why is the goal important to you?

Time frame

Goals are usually something we want now. Don't let “want” speed up your time frame.

It's important to give your financial goals as many opportunities to succeed as you can. Setting and achieving S.M.A.R.T Goals is just one of the ways CFCU can help take the stress out of managing your money. Opening a savings account or setting up an automatic withdrawal each month are easy first steps to achieving your goal.

Monthly bills are ripe for the picking

Most people prefer to **pay bills automatically, so they don't have to worry about forgetting something or missing a due date.** Amazing tools like **Bill Pay** can take the headache out of regular payments. This way of spending works great so long as you take time to review and scrutinize recurring charges.

The main aim of reviewing bills is to find where you can cut spending and increase savings. **Your secondary goal is awareness.** Do you know where every dollar is going? Are these dollars going toward your well-being?

Organize your bills

Gather all your monthly statements and invoices. Double check to make sure you don't miss one. Review your credit card statements and automatic payments. And check your mailbox – sometimes those old-school paper bills are the ones that throw a wrench into the works!

Once you're confident you have everything in front of you, it's time to list your regular expenditures. Use [this worksheet](#) or another easy-to-follow tool that works for you.

Identify potential savings.

On the worksheet, we include a "Potential Savings" checkbox. **Evaluate every bill as an opportunity for savings.**

- Can enrolling in automatic payments reduce your interest rate?
- Did the promotional rate on your cable or internet package expire? (If you can't renegotiate your rate, consider transitioning to something more basic.)
- What does your credit card statement reveal about your convenience purchases? Can you eliminate one coffee, lunch, or splurge each week?

Put your changes into action.

Transform your findings into a to-do list. Call the cable company. Pack a lunch. Execute the plan.

The next part is pure joy. As you save a few dollars here and a few dollars there, a funny thing happens. **They add up!!**

Time to put those savings to work

Congratulations! You're one step closer to making savings a habit. You know where your money is going. And you've figured out how to pay yourself first instead of everyone else.

The final step is to put that savings to work on your behalf. **Here are ideas where to start if:**

- **You have debt:** Good news! Finding savings is a key step to pay off your debt.
- **You're building an emergency fund:** Add it to your CFCU savings account.
- **You're planning for your future:** You can start investing.
- **You're ready to give back:** Find an organization that means something to you.

Now is the time. Make a plan, review your bills, and get busy working on a savings strategy to achieve your goals.