

Financial Fitness Tips



Paying your mortgage on time sounds simple, but we know it comes with big commitment. With McCue Mortgage, we reward you for getting financially fit with our First of the Month Club. Each month that your payment is received on or before the first of the month, you are automatically entered in a drawing for a free mortgage payment!

From eating better to getting organized, we've outlined some of our favorite tips to get you on track and paying by the first of the month, creating a healthy financial lifestyle!



Tip 1: Get Organized

The first step toward financial fitness is knowing where you stand. To start, you need to get organized. Separate your bills from junk mail and personal mail. Streamline further by placing your bills in order by due date and priority level. Then, make a commitment to sending all of your payments out on time. To do this best, schedule a bill paying time, just like scheduling gym time or an appointment. This is fundamental to creating an effective bill paying system.

Remember, if you pay by check, to leave time for mailing and processing. Make time in advance to set up automated payments so you have less to worry about each month.

Tip 2: Eat Better!

You can slim your waistline and your wallet by eating better and smarter. Cooking at home allows you to save money and be more conscious of exactly what is in your food. You can really make a dent in your spending by packing a lunch and brewing your own coffee.

Beverages are high markup items, and by cutting back you can keep the cost of activities down. Make a conscious effort to substitute water for other drinks when at home and especially when dining out or at an event.

If you want even more savings – and you are a smoker – quit! Not only will this improve your health, but you will save thousands of dollars over a single year.



Tip 3: Shop Smarter



Use the internet to research and purchase consumer goods like clothing, electronics and furniture. There are many online sites for coupons, but, use caution. Coupons can provide you with great savings, but can lose their benefit when you purchase items solely because you have a coupon for them.

No matter what, stick to your shopping list! It's your guide to staying on task and under budget. Be conscious of what you really need and cut out frills such as subscriptions you don't use or need, including extras like DVR or voicemail on multiple lines. Be savvy, shop sales and buy in bulk.

Buying inexpensive fad pieces and investing in the classics gives you flexibility when you need a change. When you have items to discard, consider consignment. Not only can you find some great pieces in these stores, you can sell your old clothing and make a few extra dollars!

...Getting Fit

Few fitness plans are developed without a goal. Cutting back on your excess spending is an important step in building extra cash. Many of us indulge in luxuries that can be scaled back in order to reduce your expenses and build savings.

Remember, no athlete has achieved greatness without a goal and a plan to achieve it. The same applies to your efforts to get fit and maintain a healthy financial lifestyle. Celebrate the goals you've achieved and continue to set new ones to keep your financial well-being a healthy priority in your life!



Take creative advantage of the opportunity knocking – you have more than you think!



Take time to plan purchases in *advance*.



Live by the budget.



Foster a **two way** relationship with your creditor.



Luxuries **aren't** always for the everyday.



Find ways to cut back without cutting out.



Form efficient and reliable bill pay paying **habits**.



This concept isn't what you think. We aren't telling you to max out your credit cards...we're recommending that you make the most of your relationships with your creditors! Pick up the phone and talk about options they give to customers, keep an open mind and be willing to negotiate. Credit card companies may offer lower interest rates or other terms to keep you a happy customer.

Other creditors, like utility providers, may offer payment plans to help you get back on time and reduce your fees. Ask for a change in your bill cycle to align with your paycheck, which assures you that, the money is in the bank when your bill is due. Remember, one of the best ways to stay financially fit is to charge only what you can pay off today.

Tip 4: **Maximize CREDIT**



Think of your **family, friends and neighbors** as great resources for help and savings. Ask a friend who has a wholesale store membership to shop with them for the day, so you can take advantage of the deals without the membership fee. Look for discount and coupon opportunities for friends and family and consider sharing, like joining together your family's phone plans.

Borrow what you can instead of buying. If you're behind on some of your bills, you may want to consider a small loan from your family to get current or avoid late fees, which can really add up. If you're trying to work your way into our First of the Month Club, borrowing one payment from your family that you'll pay back in 2 years can be just the boost you need to get your payment in before the first. Or tap into your tax refund to bring your payment current or to have your payment in before the first of the month.

Hold a tag or garage sale to clear out those items you no longer use or need. Depending on the items you have to sell, you can earn over \$500 in a weekend.

Tip 5:

Opportunity Knocks!



Tip 6: **TRIM Down!**

Get smart about your technology. If you have a smart phone, reconsider the cost of a land line or internet at home. Don't pay twice for features that you aren't using all the time. Scale back your data plan or minutes. Reassess your cable services and watch TV programs online.

Evaluate what you spend on entertainment. Rent a movie and pop microwave popcorn at home for a fraction of the price. Instead of splurging on beauty items at a salon, have a spa party at home with friends with manicures and pedicures. Host a dinner party at home to entertain on a budget.

Think carefully about the large ticket items you may want to buy. Spend only if you have the money to pay for them saved and aren't behind on bills. If you don't have the cash, set a savings goal. Fulfill your purchase only when you have reached your goal.

Rather than traveling for vacation, have a "stay-cation" this year. There are a lot of free activities in your town that can fill the vacation void with fun!