



Those Lazy, Crazy Spending Days of Summer

Who doesn't love summer? Holiday weekends, nice weather, and plenty of daylight after work so you can really enjoy your evenings. If you're like me, summertime is much more fun when some money is spent on vacations, eating out, and doing things with friends and family.

Now that fall is here, your wallet may feel a little light after all that spending. With cold weather (i.e. heating) and holidays (i.e. gifts) on the way, it's time to tighten up your spending to prepare for winter. The following are a few tips on how to prepare for the upcoming months.

Slow down your spending

This might be a little painful, but now is the time to start spending less and saving more for the upcoming months. It's always hard to cut back, especially if your spending got a little out of hand this summer. Use the dropping temperatures as a reason to spend a little more time cocooning at home with friends and family. Instead of going out for dinner, invite friends over for a potluck and movie night. Weekend afternoons are always a great time to gather a crowd, watch the game, and enjoy the banter as you root for your team to win.

Set expectations for the holidays

Early fall is a good time to talk with your family and friends about the upcoming holidays. Many people are reeling from the current economic situation, so your holiday traditions and expectations may need to change a little this year. Although these are hard discussions to have with your loved ones, it's better to talk about any changes in your holiday plans now rather than wait until later in the year. Many people will be staying at home instead of traveling or cutting back on gift giving. Giving people a heads-up earlier rather than later can help both of you adjust to the different plans this year.

Put money aside for heating

Cold weather is coming, so it's time to put away those shorts and pull out the blankets. If you live in a northern climate, you also need to get ready to turn on your heat. Now is a great time to start putting aside money to pay for the heating bills that will invariably come later this year and early next year. A few \$20's slipped into an envelope during the next few months will help ease the burden when the cold weather really hits.

Summer fun and back-to-school time can really impact your spending. You have a few months of reprieve to prepare yourself for the holiday and heating seasons that are right around the corner. Tightening up on your spending now will feel a little tough, but creativity can go a long way in preparing your finances for the upcoming months.