

10 WAYS TO SAVE \$50 PER MONTH - OR MORE!

A
THINKGLINK
MEDIA
REPORT

by Ilyce R. Glink





money, money, money

How can you save \$50 per month? What about even more? Let's look at where average consumers spend their money for some ideas on how you can cut your costs. If you're making any of these mistakes with your money, you'll know exactly what to cut and how much you can save each month by doing so.

Let's get started:



1

Smoking Ban

Although cigarettes cost up to \$12 per pack (thank you, New York City), the average price nationwide is around \$5 per pack, according to the American Lung Association. If you smoke two packs a day, you're spending on average \$10 per day, \$70 per week, \$300 per month, or \$3,650 per year. If you just cut back to one pack a day, you'll save \$150 per month or \$1,825 per year.

If you smoke less than a pack a day, that's great — but you can still cut back. It'll help your health and your budget.

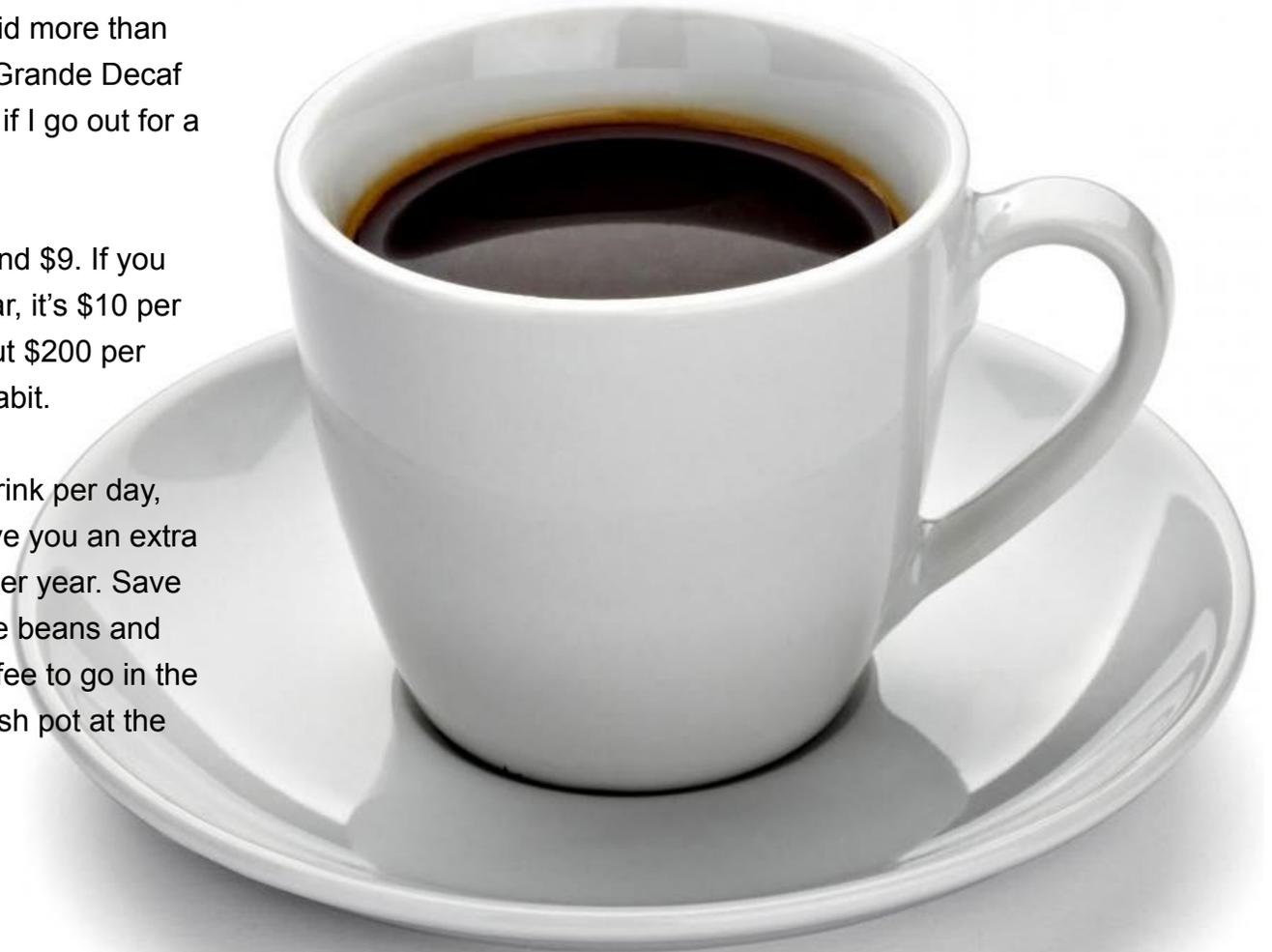
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Kick The Coffee Habit

While a simple cup of coffee at Starbucks costs around \$2 per cup, the expensive coffees (the lattes, mochas, and others) run more than twice that. I've paid more than \$4 for my drink of choice, a Grande Decaf Latte. This gets really pricey if I go out for a second fix.

Two lattes per day cost around \$9. If you throw the change in the tip jar, it's \$10 per day, \$50 per week, and about \$200 per month to feed the caffeine habit.

Cutting back to one coffee drink per day, Monday to Friday, should give you an extra \$100 per month, or \$1,200 per year. Save even more by purchasing the beans and making yourself a cup of coffee to go in the morning, or brewing up a fresh pot at the office.



3

Get Over Overspending at Discount Warehouse Clubs

You can save a lot of money by shopping at stores like Costco or Sam's Club. But you can also fritter away a lot of cash by picking up things you want, but don't necessarily need. For example, on a recent trip to Costco, I saw the new Adele CD sitting on the shelf. Did I need to buy it? Of course not. But when I saw it sitting there, it reminded me that I'd been wanting to listen to it, so I bought it. Another \$12 spent that I absolutely didn't need to spend.

There are two tricks to shopping successfully at a discount warehouse club:

1. Make a list and stick to it
2. Go with someone who will keep you focused

If you go to Costco or another warehouse club once a month, try to stay focused exclusively on your list. You'll save at least \$50 per visit, or \$600 per year.

Other Places Where You May Be Overspending:

- Waiting in line at the grocery store can lead to impulse purchases
- Online shopping might cause you to add an extra item to your shopping cart so you can qualify for free shipping
- Apps on your phone seem cheap but \$.99 per game adds up quickly. Do you really need it?





4

Get Creative with Gifts

If you make a list of all the gifts you give during the year, including Christmas, Hanukkah, Easter, birthdays, anniversaries, administrative assistant's day, the boss' day, wedding and shower gifts, etc., you'll realize that you spend more than \$1,000 (perhaps more than \$2,000) per year on gift-giving. While the average price of a gift might only be \$25 to \$40, it adds up — particularly as you get older.

Try giving less expensive gifts that have more meaning attached to them. For holiday gifts, try giving a magazine subscription for \$12 to \$30, instead of a sweater which might cost twice that much. Or, buy fruit at a local grocery store and make your own fruit basket. If you can be creative and manage to shave \$5 to \$10 off of each gift you give, you may be able to save \$50 to \$100 per month, or \$600 to \$1,200 per year.

More Gift Ideas:

- Give a used book instead of buying new
- Bake cookies or cook a special dinner
- Give a potted plant
- Make a mix CD
- Knit a hat, scarf or mittens
- Frame a photo of the two of you together

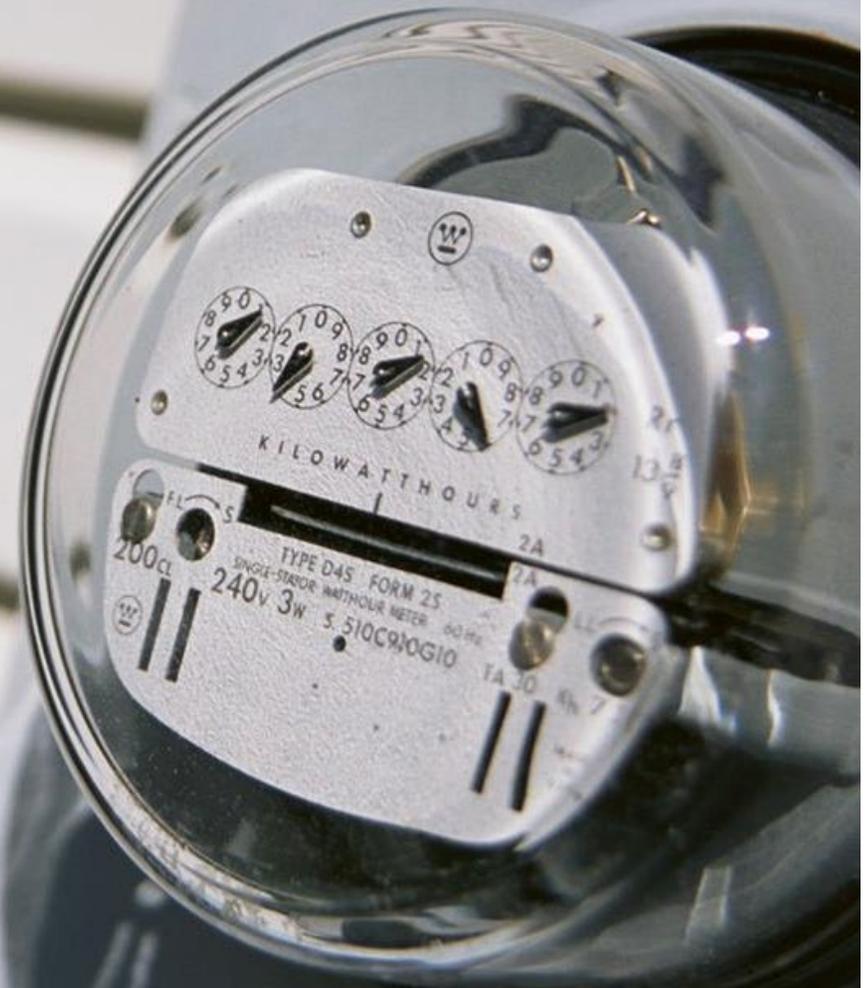
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Watch Your Energy Bills

Changing how you use energy is an easy way to save money:

- Turning up the thermostat 2 degrees in the summer, and turning it down 2 degrees in the winter, can help you shave up to 10 percent off your energy bill, for a savings of \$25 to \$50 or more per month
- Stop air from leaking into or out of your house by caulking cracks, adding insulation to your basement ceiling or attic floor, and putting in storm windows
- Change half of your incandescent light bulbs to energy-saving LED bulbs or the new fluorescents bulbs and save even more.

Altogether, you ought to easily be able to save \$25 to \$50 per month, if not more. That adds up to a savings of more than \$600 per year.



6

Forget Eating Out, Start to Eat In

Between kids' activities and late work hours, the average family doesn't get to eat dinner together very often. If they do, it's frequently a take-out meal or dinner at a restaurant. Unless you're eating at McDonald's, it's tough to go out to eat with your family of four for less than \$40. If you eat out three times a week, you're looking at \$120 per week, or at least \$7,800 per year. While planning meals might not be your favorite thing to

do, you can dramatically save money by cooking at home — and perhaps that's motivation enough. You can make a meal of spaghetti with turkey meatballs and broccoli for less than \$2.50 per person, or \$10 for everyone. The same meal will cost you four to five times as much at your local Italian restaurant. If you can cut out one take-out or restaurant meal each week, you'll save \$50 per week, \$200 per month, and \$2,400 per year.



Meal Ideas:

- Quick-bake pizza casserole
- Skillet mac & cheese
- Cornbread chicken pot pie
- Beef lo mein
- Italian turkey sliders
- Buttermilk ranch chicken breasts
- Chipotle-bean enchiladas
- Italian sausage and potatoes
- Turkey Waldorf salad
- Fried rice with veggies

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BYOL: Bring Your Own Lunch

And while we're on the subject of food, buying your lunch will cost you \$5 to \$8 per outing. Depending on the city, you might spend \$10 per lunch (plus the trip to your favorite gourmet coffee shop later in the afternoon). Ten bucks a day means you're spending \$50 per week, \$200 per month and \$2,400 per year.

If you bring your lunch, you'll spend less than \$2 per lunch, depending on what you bring. That's \$10 per week, or \$500 per year. You'll save \$40 per week, \$160 per month, or around \$1,900 per year -- and you'll be eating much healthier food. (Don't forget to pack a snack or two while you're at it.)

Lunch Ideas:

- Bring a crusty baguette sandwich in wax paper
- Pack your own charcuterie plate in tupperware
- Assemble a salad in the office break room
- Serve up gazpacho in a mason jar



8

Cut Back on Entertainment Expenses

Having fun can be pricey, but it doesn't have to be. Some of my most memorable good times didn't cost a dime, and I'm confident that you can find ways to cut back on your entertainment budget and still have fun.

If you do it right, you'll easily save \$50 per month, or \$600 per year, in your entertainment budget alone.

To cut your budget without limiting your laughs, try these budget-friendly entertainment options:

- Trade a trendy, upscale restaurant for a more low-key neighborhood joint
- Go to the cheap movie theater, or go to a matinee show and save \$2 to \$3 per ticket
- Take a pass on buying live rock concert tickets (which can run you \$50 to \$100 apiece)
- Rent movies rather than seeing them in the theater
- Have a workout date: ride your bikes, go for a run, or walk around downtown and see the sights



Consider cutting back on cable tv too. **Cable TV comes with hundreds of channels but can cost hundreds of dollars.** You can opt for a less-expensive package or try low-cost alternatives like Netflix and Hulu.



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Travel Smart

Take a week off and be a tourist in your own city. You may be surprised by what you find: a museum you've never visited, a restaurant you've always passed by or a store you've never browsed. There are also many day-trips you could make, to both surrounding small towns and other cities in the area.

Or, take some of your vacation time and work on your house. You'll save double because you aren't spending money traveling, and you're doing important, regular maintenance around your home that you might ordinarily pay someone else to do because you're so busy.

If you must travel, travel at off-peak times, and shop around for the best deal. Don't be afraid to look at discount airlines. You can also consider other types of travel, like going by bus or train.



10

No More Bottled Water

A 16-ounce bottle of water can cost up to \$3 per bottle, while a similar amount of tap water costs less than one cent. Consumers pay between 240 and 10,000 times more per unit volume for bottled water than for tap water.

So, what do you get for your \$3? Typically, 90 percent or more of the cost of bottled water goes to something other than the water, like packaging and marketing. Is that worth it?

If you buy just one \$3 bottle of water a day, that adds up to \$21 a week, \$90 a month and \$1,095 a year.

Save your \$3 per bottle and buy a reusable container. Reusable bottled may cost you \$8-12 initially but you can fill it up with tap water at home and on the go as often as you want. You'll quickly recoup your costs and save.

Drinking tap water in your reusable bottle could save you over \$1,000 a year.



Adding It All Up

Here's how much you'd save if you made some of the change we've discussed in this e-report:

Category	Week	Month	Year
Smoking	\$35	\$150	\$1,825
Coffee	\$25	\$100	\$1,200
Warehouse Club	\$12.50	\$50	\$600
Gifts	\$12.50	\$50	\$600
Energy Bill	\$12.50	\$50	\$600
Eating In	\$50	\$200	\$2,400
Bringing Lunch	\$40	\$160	\$1,900
Entertainment	\$12.50	\$50	\$600
Traveling	\$12.50	\$50	\$600
Bottled Water	\$21	\$90	\$1,095
Total Saved	\$233.50	\$950	\$11,420





How much will you save?

That depends on what you're willing to give up. Take a look at what you're spending each week, and try to pinpoint simple steps you can take every day to cut your costs .

If you don't know what you spend, write it down. Invest in a \$1 notebook and write down every cent you spend. I love this trick because, if nothing else, writing every cent you spend is such a pain that you'll soon spend less so you have fewer expenditures to track!

Report back and let me know how it's going — I love to hear savings success stories. You can always find me online at ThinkGlink.com and on social media: [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Google+](#).

Good luck!
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THE INTENTIONAL INVESTOR

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WILDLY SUCCESSFUL
IN REAL ESTATE
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This may be the best time in years to buy investment property. Interest rates are at historic lows, so financing a property is more affordable than ever. Better yet, home prices are hovering at levels last seen in 2003.

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- How to identify and understand unique investment opportunities;
- How to develop a winning investment strategy.

To learn more and to buy the series, go to ThinkGlink.com.

About Ilyce Glink

Ilyce Glink is the author of ten books, including the bestselling 100 Questions Every First-Time Home Buyer Should Ask. Her nationally syndicated column, "Real Estate Matters," appears in more than 125 newspapers and Web sites, and her online "Ask Ilyce" columns are read by hundreds of thousands of people every month.

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Ilyce has appeared on hundreds of television and radio programs across the country, including "Oprah," the "Today" show, the "Early Show," and on CNN, CNN-FN, CNBC and Fox News.

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