

New York State Consumer Protection Board is on your **SYDE!**

Please **JOIN** our **Stretch Your Dollar Effort:**



## **General Savings and Cost Cutting TIPS**

The following suggestions have been received from consumers thus far. Please add your own suggestions by sending an email to [my2cents@consumer.state.ny.us](mailto:my2cents@consumer.state.ny.us).

### Cost Cutting

- TAKE A DRIVER'S TRAINING OR DEFENSIVE DRIVING COURSE to reduce your automobile insurance rates. Many companies offer lower rates for safe drivers. Also, if you generally drive less than 10 miles from home, you may qualify for lower rates.
- FREQUENT YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC LIBRARY for free access to books, movies and music.
- AVOID Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) charging service fees.
- RENT TEXTBOOKS WHERE POSSIBLE, especially college books.
- VOLUNTEER AS AN USHER at a local theater to see shows free-of-charge.
- START A LUNCH CLUB at work and rotate who brings in food. If you have 5 people in the group, then you can buy in bulk and only have to bring lunch once a week.
- ASK FOR A LOWER INTEREST RATE FROM YOUR CREDIT CARD COMPANY. If your credit rating is good, you may qualify for a lower rate.

### *New for the Holiday Season:*

- COLLECT MAGAZINES in your home, decide which ones you just don't need or read anymore and immediately cancel the subscriptions.
- ORGANIZE A NEIGHBORHOOD DVD LIBRARY so everyone can borrow movies.
- TRADE BOOKS ONLINE.
- LOOK AT SITES where you can join networks of people in your city, town, neighborhood or even apartment building who are willing to lend items you need but don't want to buy, such as expensive tools, a ladder or air mattresses.
- EXPLORE RENTING ITEMS YOU MAY WANT. More companies are making it possible to rent items offering membership options that provide additional discounts.
- CANCEL one or more of your premium cable channels.
- EXTEND YOUR PERSONAL MAINTENANCE ROUTINE by getting a haircut or spa treatment on a less regular basis, unless health reasons apply.
- LEARN TO SEW. Some dry cleaners charge \$2 to fix a button. Meanwhile, a spool of thread and a package of needles together typically cost less than two dollars.
- NEGOTIATE GYM DUES. Ask your fitness center to meet a comparable facility's promotional price.
- FIND FREE BANKING. Some banks charge more than \$100 a year to maintain a checking account. Others offer free checking only if you maintain a minimum balance of \$1,500. Some offer accounts that don't require minimums. To locate the best deal, track your account activity for a month and compare banking fees in your area. Check out [www.bankrate.com](http://www.bankrate.com).

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## **General Savings and Cost Cutting TIPS** *(continued)*

- SAVE MONEY ON HAIRCUTS BY SERVING AS A "HAIR MODEL" for aspiring hair stylists/barbers at accredited/licensed schools.

### Generating Money

#### *New for the Holiday Season:*

- SEARCH FOR POSITIONS AS EXTRAS IN MOVIES, which can pay as much as \$200 per day.
- RESEARCH the opportunity of becoming a member of a paid focus group.
- START WALKING DOGS in your neighborhood for cash.
- SELL GENTLY USED AND UNNEEDED ITEMS such as clothing and shoes, musical instruments, collectibles, and sporting goods, which can generate money through online auction sites, in consignment stores or at a garage sale. You may also explore trading good with friends and neighbors.
- SELL YOU OLD CDS, DVDS AND VIDEO GAMES.
- SIGN UP FOR LOCAL TRIVIA CONTESTS that pay winners.
- SELL USED BOOKS to bookstores and online.

### Shopping -- Spending Money Wisely

- DON'T ACCEPT THE FIRST PRICE YOU ARE QUOTED. Get more than one quote, and bargain for lower prices where you can.
- CHECK STORE POLICIES ON RESHELVING OR RESTOCKING FEES. Some stores have return policies, but the fine print may include a reshelving or restocking fee of a percentage of the purchase price for an item.
- CHECK RECEIPTS FOR OVERCHARGES and challenge price discrepancies. Also check the store's policy on overcharges, as some stores offer more than the difference of the money owed for an overcharge.
- PURCHASE SCRATCH AND DENT or FLOOR MODELS if possible.
- VACATION CLOSE TO HOME to save money on hotel bills and gasoline. New York State's *I Love NY* campaign has great ideas for leisure activities statewide.

#### *New for the Holiday Season:*

- READ SALES CIRCULARS AFTER PURCHASING an item as it may subsequently go on sale. Then, request a price adjustment or credit.
- DISCOVER BEST-PRICE OFFERS. Most large stores have a 14-day price guarantee and many provide a "best price" guarantee, which means they'll refund the difference between what you paid and the sale price, plus up to 20 percent.
- CHECK OUT THE PRICES of items at the brick and mortar stores as well as on various Internet sites before making a purchase.

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### **General Savings and Cost Cutting TIPS** *(continued)*

- LOOK FOR INTERNET SITES that aggregate hundreds of promotional coupon codes that you can type in at a retailer's website to get discounts and rebates. To find them, simply type in your favorite retailer or manufacturer and coupon or promotion.
- LOOK FOR FREE SHIPPING AND FREE RETURNS.
- CHECK OUT ONLINE OUTLETS and markdown sites of your favorite store.
- SIGN UP for retailer newsletters, discount coupons, information about insider sales or special markdowns, as well as special promotions and rebates from manufacturers.
- PUT SALE ITEMS ON HOLD until the sale starts.
- LOOK OR ASK FOR FREE SAMPLES of products.
- ASK FOR DISCOUNTS for referring customers.
- SKIP THE EXTENDED WARRANTY as most electronics tend to outlive the extended warranty period without a problem.
- NEGOTIATE WITH THE SALES CLERK or the manager of a store for a discount especially if you have proof of a lower price at another retail outlet.
- ASK FOR A VOLUME DISCOUNT when purchasing more than one item or appliance from a store.
- THINK CAREFULLY about purchasing final-sale or as is items.
- SHOP WITH ONE CREDIT CARD -- pick the credit card with the lowest interest rate and/or the one that offers benefits or discounts for purchases.
- ASK FOR A DISCOUNT ON DELIVERY OR INSTALLATION of a product when the price is nonnegotiable.
- LOOK FOR SLIGHT IMPERFECTIONS in a garment or product to negotiate a price reduction.
- KNOW WHEN TO SHOP FOR CERTAIN PRODUCTS TO GET GREAT SALES. Certain times of the year are known for certain products: e.g., cars in November and December and late summer when new models are out; end of season for clothing as the new collections arrive.
- LOOK FOR IN-STORE PROMOTION DAYS.
- CHECK RECEIPTS for additional coupons or discounts.
- TAKE ADVANTAGE OF DISCOUNTS. Students can get tickets to the Metropolitan Opera in New York City for reduced prices. AAA members get discounts at hotels and car rental companies. Each time you join an organization or a new association, examine its benefits package for discount offers.
- RESEARCH PACKAGE DEALS. Consolidate home phone-Internet-cell phone service, or Internet-cable-phone service and car-home-life insurance. The exact savings will depend on where you live and what services you choose.
- **Add your own tips!**