



Save now for holiday gift-giving

The holidays have a way of sneaking up on us. Before you know it, the stores will be full of holiday cheer, enticing you to begin what is often a season of overspending.

Now is the ideal time to start saving so you won't be caught unprepared. If you enter the holidays with a plan, you will be less likely to impulse-purchase or rack up unwanted credit card debt.

THREE EASY STEPS TO MAKE YOUR HOLIDAYS DEBT-FREE

1. Set a gift-buying budget.

Decide in advance how much you can reasonably spend. For some people, setting a dollar amount per person works well. Or you can set a total amount that feels comfortable for you.

2. Use your budget to determine how much you need to save each month.

Take a hard look at your income versus your bills and see how much money you can set aside. If your gift-buying budget is more than you can save, it's time to reevaluate. Remember, the goal is to get through the holiday season without racking up debt.

3. Put the money out of reach.

Open a separate savings account so you won't be tempted to spend your holiday money. When you're ready to begin buying gifts, using cash can help keep you on budget. Another option is to purchase gift cards you can use for holiday purchases.

