



You Can Control Your Spending

You might be a person who does very well with your money. Your money management skills are serving you well. On the other hand, you might have some concern about your spending habits. Maybe you are an over-spender.

Regardless of whether you are a controlled spender or an over-spender, there are ways to improve your particular situation.

There are many tools and techniques to help over-spenders transform negative habits into positive behavior. Here are a few:

1. **Stay clear** – of the spots where you know that you spend lots of money.
2. **Take a timeout** – Create a policy for yourself that says, “I will use layaway, the store’s ‘hold policy’ or I will wait two weeks before I buy this item.” This will give you time to think before you buy.
3. **Shop with a list** – Most purchases that sabotage a spending plan are impulse buys. Using a list and sticking to it, will make splurging a thing of the past.
4. **You can still splurge** – but do it economically and consciously. If you have an urge to spend, spend, spend consider doing it at Goodwill instead of Saks Fifth Avenue. You might find that your urge is satisfied.
5. **Track your money** – and use cash when you purchase items. You’ve worked hard for that money and sometimes it is more difficult to exchange cash when making a purchase.
6. **Call a friend** – Just talking with a trusted person can reduce the urge to splurge.

Marketers would prefer that you shopped from a subconscious level. To fight back, ask yourself these questions before you buy:

1. Why am I here?
2. Will I really use this product?
3. Are there underlying motives for making this purchase?
4. Do I own anything else that provides the same use?
5. Do I need this?
6. Did I feel a need for this item before I saw it in the mall?
7. Am I motivated to buy this because I like the setting I saw it in?
8. Did the salesperson influence my desire for this item?
9. Where will I put it?
10. What is the financial cost of this purchase and can I really afford it?
11. What if I wait?
12. What else will I have to give up to afford this?
13. What are the other costs of this purchase? (Will it start an argument with my spouse? Make me feel guilty? Do I need to buy other matching items?)
14. How do I feel?

If you are looking for some things to do instead of shopping, consider these...

- Listen to your favorite music
- Enjoy a long, warm bubble bath
- Go for a walk
- Relax outside
- Exercise
- Do stretching exercises
- Watch the sunset or sunrise
- Concentrate on a relaxing scene
- Write your thoughts and feelings in a personal journal
- Attend a favorite athletic event
- Read a special book or magazine
- Play a musical instrument
- Work with plants
- Learn a new skill
- See a special play, movie or concert
- Ride a bike or motorcycle
- Make a nutritious meal
- Draw or paint a picture
- Swim, float, wade or relax in a pool or at the beach
- Do aerobics or dance
- Visit a special place that you enjoy
- Take time to smell the roses, or any other flower that you enjoy
- Go horseback riding
- Enjoy a relaxing nap
- Visit a museum or art gallery
- Practice yoga
- Relax in a whirlpool or sauna
- Enjoy a cool, refreshing glass of water or fruit juice
- Enjoy the beauty of nature
- Play like you did as a child
- Star gaze
- Window shop
- Day dream
- Attend a special workshop
- Go sailing or paddle boating
- Create with clay or pottery
- Pet an animal
- Watch your favorite TV show
- Write a poem
- Make a bouquet of flowers
- Relax and watch the clouds
- Visit a park, woods or forest
- Phone a special friend
- Picnic in a beautiful setting
- Enjoy a cup of coffee or tea
- Play a board game
- Participate in a hobby
- Play a video game
- Spend time playing and laughing with your child. Take walks, splash around in the bathtub or crawl around together on the floor.