

Eight Easy Exercises for Financial Fitness

Plan Your Spending



A spending plan puts you in charge of your money.
It will help you reach your financial goals.

These exercises will help you make a
spending plan that works for you.

Exercise 1

Fixed Spending

Write down amounts you spend each month on each of the following:

- **Savings (Pay Yourself First)** _____
- **Rent/Mortgage** _____
- **Utilities**
 - Electricity _____
 - Gas/Propane/Oil _____
 - Internet _____
 - Phone _____
 - Trash _____
 - Water _____
 - Other _____
- **Child Care/Child Support** _____
- **Insurance (if paid monthly)** _____
- Type _____
- _____
- _____
- **Car Payment** _____
- **Other** _____
- **Debt Payments** _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- TOTAL (A)** _____

Exercise 2

Flexible Spending

Write down the amount you think you spend each month on each flexible expense.

- **Food**
 - at home _____
 - away from home _____
 - **Household operations** (cleaning supplies, paper products, etc.) _____
 - **Phone** _____
 - **Transportation**
 - gas/bus/taxi _____
 - repairs _____
 - **Medications/Medical** _____
 - **Clothing**
 - purchases _____
 - care (laundry/dry cleaning) _____
 - **Personal Care** _____
 - **Allowances for self/children** _____
 - **Entertainment** _____
 - **Pets** _____
 - **Other** _____
 - **Other** _____
- TOTAL (B)** _____

Exercise 3 (p. 3-4)

OCCASIONAL

| | ITEM | Jan. | Feb. | March | Apr. | May |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|------|------|-------|------|-----|
| Automobile | License | | | | | |
| | Inspection | | | | | |
| | Oil Change/Maintenance | | | | | |
| | Insurance (if not monthly) | | | | | |
| Home | Repairs/Maintenance/Yard | | | | | |
| | Insurance (Home Owner's/Renter's) | | | | | |
| | Furnishings | | | | | |
| Holidays/Birthdays | Gifts/Cards | | | | | |
| Vacation | Travel | | | | | |
| Entertainment | Entertaining/Parties | | | | | |
| Medical | Doctor Visits | | | | | |
| | Dental | | | | | |
| | Prescriptions | | | | | |
| | Vision | | | | | |
| School | Fees/Tuition | | | | | |
| | Supplies/Books | | | | | |
| | Class Trips/Pictures/etc. | | | | | |
| Dues/Subscription | Magazines/Papers | | | | | |
| | CDs, Book clubs | | | | | |
| | Memberships/Clubs | | | | | |
| Clothes/Shoes | Children | | | | | |
| | Adults | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | | |

Exercise 4

Set Aside for Emergencies

An emergency fund can reduce stress if something completely unexpected happens:

- your income decreases
- you have an accident or illness
- your car breaks down

What emergencies could happen in your life?

- _____
- _____
- _____

How much money do you need in your emergency fund?

- 1 month's basic expenses _____
- 1 – 3 month's rent plus other basic expenses _____

How much can you set aside each month for emergencies?

(D) _____

Exercise 5

Set Aside for Things You Want

Think about your financial goals. Be specific and set a date you want to reach each one so you will know how much money you must save each month. Choose goals you can accomplish without being frustrated. You will enjoy a feeling of accomplishment as you reach them.

For example, if in **three to six months** you want to:

- pay off \$300 in credit card debt,
- save \$250 for tuition for a class, or
- buy three tickets to an amusement park

and in **six months to one year**, you want to:

- save \$1,000 for a down payment on a used car, or
- save \$600 for a vacation with your family,

you might want to make a chart like the one below to start saving for goals. Fill in the chart with your personal financial goals.

| Your Personal Financial Goals | Target Date | Number of Months to Date | Total Needed | \$ to Save Monthly |
|---|-------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | |
| Total Monthly Savings Needed (E) | | | | |

Exercise 6

Add Up Take Home Income

(After Taxes)

Income earned each month:

- Wages _____
- Tips _____

Total Earned (a) _____

Other monthly income:

- Child Support _____
- Social Security _____
- Unemployment _____
- Food Assistance _____
- Cash Assistance _____
- Gifts _____
- Alimony _____
- Interest _____
- Other _____

Total Other (b) _____

Total Income F (a + b) _____

Exercise 7

Balance the Bottom Line

Income: (F p. 8) _____

Expenses:

\$ fixed (A p. 2) _____

\$ flexible (B p. 3) _____

\$ occasional (C p. 4) _____

\$ emergencies (D p. 6) _____

\$ goals (E p. 7) _____

Total: _____

Difference: _____

Do your income and expenses match?
Do you need to make changes to make your spending plan work?

Making the Spending Plan Balance

- Increase Income
- Reduce Expenses
- Catch Spending Leaks
- Sign up for the Earned Income Credit and/or Child Tax Credit
- Consider Gifts from Family
- Barter for Services

Exercise 8

Take Action

Once you have a beginning plan, you can use it to help you on the road to financial fitness.

To become financially fit, I will start with the following actions:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

You may want to use one of the following Ohio State University Extension resources to help you. They may be available from your local OSU Extension office.

- Counting Your Money Calendar, HEMG001
- Budget-in-a-Box Envelope Set, HEMG003
- Budget-in-a-Box Tip Sheets, HEMG004
- In Over Your Head: Life Saving Strategies for Financial Crisis, Bulletin 891

Developed by *Jean Clements*, Extension Educator
Family and Consumer Sciences, Greene County

Revisions: *Jean Clements*, Extension Educator, Emeritus
Christine F. Olinsky, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, OSU Extension
(2016) *Shannon Carter*, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences
Fairfield County
Candace J. Heer, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, Morrow County