

Take charge of your money

Money struggles can often make us feel out of control of our lives and finances. By taking charge of your finances and following some simple guidelines, you can make sure you are managing your money and thereby managing its effect on your life.



Practical tips for managing your money mindfully

- **Follow a budget** (see below for tips on how to do this) – there are many budgeting websites and apps that allow you to input your incoming and outgoing funds. Using a budget will help you track how much money you have available and make you more conscious about where you are spending your money.
- **Use 'pots'** – most bank accounts offer little side accounts or 'pots' where you can set aside money and label it as being for a specific purpose. This can be handy for separating where your money needs to go and ensuring you only spend what is in that pot.
- **Mobile banking** – most bank accounts allow you to check your balance 24/7 via their app. This can be a great way to get to know your financial situation and monitor your money daily.
- **Reach out to your loved ones** – we can be very reserved when it comes to discussing finances but opening up to your family and friends can help you with the mental burden of financial worries.
- **Stay active and distract yourself from impulse spending** – going outside for a walk is a great distraction, good for your mental health and has the bonus of not costing a thing. To prevent impulse spending, switch off 'one-click' ordering and don't allow your devices to store your card information.
- **Ask for help** – contact debt charities or any companies you need to pay and tell them your situation. They may be able to freeze interest or delay payments while you work on feeling better.
- **Put all your documents in one place** – having a folder or a box just for your financial records will make it much easier to manage. You can keep bank statements, receipts, and letters all together.
- **Build a money routine** – you could link a money management task with something that you enjoy. For example, you could go for a coffee at your favourite cafe at the end of every month, after looking through your month's expenses.
- **Direct debits** – paying by direct debit takes some of the work out of money management. Organise to have them come out the day after your payday and that way, you'll know you've got them paid for the month ahead.
- **Benefits** – check that you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to.

Creating a budget

Creating a budget is a huge first step in getting control of your finances:

- **Gather all your bills, bank statements and payslips** together to see everything that is coming in and out of your account.
- **Use a budgeting app or spreadsheet for ease.** If you don't have access to these, good old-fashioned pen and paper will do. Record all your regular incoming and outgoing payments and work out how much money there is left for food and other variable expenses.
- **Involve the whole family** in setting budgets for things such as takeaways, days out and leisure activities.
- **Set a savings goal** and try and account for putting a set amount towards it each month.

Money Helper is a free service with straightforward money advice and free, confidential help if you're worried about debt.

www.moneyhelper.org.uk

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