

MANAGING YOUR MONEY



Financial Tip of the Day: Take Advantage Of Your Debit Card

(NAPSA)—Has this ever happened to you? You swing by the grocery store, grab what you need and get in line for the checkout. Then it hits you—there's no cash in your wallet, and you left your checkbook at home.

Why run the risk of getting caught with a light wallet? Consider using a debit card for your purchases instead—you'll be glad you did.

With a debit MasterCard, you have the same control over your expenses as with your checkbook, but with greater convenience and a better handle on your purchasing habits. In fact, the trend is catching on.

According to a study conducted by Shifrin Research Inc., 87 percent of debit cardholders believe that debit is safer than cash, and almost 90 percent agree that debit cards are faster and easier to use than checks.

Debit cards offer several other advantages over cash and checks including giving you greater control over your spending habits. With cash, it's hard to keep track of the amounts you're spending from month to month. There's no automatic record of where you bought the items and how much you paid. This can pose a tremendous problem if you're trying to stick to a budget or looking for ways to change your purchasing habits.

With a debit card, transactions show up on your checking account statement with vendor information, which helps you track and manage your spending more effectively. Furthermore, you'll feel safer carrying less cash, and you can use your debit MasterCard at more than 24 million locations. That means you don't have to



A good debit card can benefit you in ways cash cannot.

worry about stopping by your bank, hitting an automatic teller machine or remembering to grab your checkbook before you go shopping.

Moreover, you can use your debit card to pay your regular bills automatically, so you never miss a due date. A cable bill, for example, can be paid on a specific day every month, so you don't have to remember to put a check in the mail. With debit, you're paying right out of your checking account, so it's important to record these transactions in your account register.

And, each time you use your debit MasterCard to make a qualified purchase through June 30th, you'll automatically be entered into the MasterCard SunStakes Sweepstakes. You can also enter by mail. The grand-prize winner will drive away in a 2002 GMC Envoy. If your financial institution offers loyalty service programs, you also can earn frequent-flyer miles or other rewards when you use your debit MasterCard. See MasterCard.com for details.

If you already have a debit MasterCard, try using it more frequently. It's an easier, more convenient and smarter way to pay.