

MONEY tips & tactics



Holiday Budgets Prevent Spending Blues

(NAPSA)—'Tis the season to be spending. Whether on gifts for the kids or a vacation for yourself, follow Santa's advice: make a list and check it twice. A budget list, that is. Having one can help keep holiday cheer from turning into a New Year's budget hangover.



"The easiest way to avoid spending too much over the holidays is set a budget for how much you want to spend, especially for gifts, and stick with it," advises attorney Jon Olson, editor at FindLaw.com, a free legal information Web site.

Set A Budget, Stick To It

Even outside the holidays, Americans do a poor job of keeping a rein on their spending.

Sixty-one percent of Americans either don't have an annual household budget or have difficulty sticking to their budget, according to a new survey by FindLaw.com. Even though most people have a household budget, nearly half of those who set a budget had trouble sticking to that budget this year or completely gave up trying to follow it.

Leave Credit Cards At Home

The best way to maintain financial discipline might be to stop using credit cards. "If you leave the credit cards at home," says Olson, "you won't spend what you don't have. If you know you don't have enough money to buy something and pay for it this month, then maybe you shouldn't buy it at all."

"Setting a budget may be the best gift that you can give yourself," says Olson.