

20 Ways to Save Money in College

By Janet Alexander

It is known that the typical college student is usually broke due to books, bills and school of course. What about the social life of a college student? What about the health of a student? What about simply having food in your dorm room? Well here are 20 tips to help new and returning college students stay within their financial means on their journey to their degree.

Books

Try to find a friend or someone on campus that has the book you need before you buy it from the bookstore. If that doesn't work, try the library. The library often will have a handful of copies from old and new books for the semester that you can borrow and will save you a couple hundred dollars for school. Also, try websites like Amazon.com and Chegg.com. These websites not only allow you to rent books, but to buy the book from these websites are usually a lot cheaper.

Purchase used textbooks (if purchasing from the bookstore) whenever possible. Used books can be bought if you want to keep them for your major and are somewhat cheaper than the new one.

Sell your books when you are finished with them. Most students only keep certain books if it is pertaining to their major. If you buy a book for a class that's an elective, sell the book back. That's a little pocket change you can have for the end of the semester.

Loans and Finances

Usually when applying for financial aid, a student might receive a refund check for money that is left over when their tuition and housing is already paid. It is wise for the student to not spend this check on miscellaneous things and to save it for an emergency or to pay back the loan when they graduate. Also, the student may want to take a summer or winter course. If the student has saved the money from their refund check, they won't have to come out of pocket for their class. "Don't tell me where your priorities are. Show me where you spend your money and I'll tell you what they are," said the late James W. Frick, former vice president for public relations, alumni affairs and development at the University of Notre Dame.

"Paying off your credit card bills and other bills before the semester starts is a wise decision as well," said Danielle Maddox, a financial adviser who handles personal finances. She explained how not having to pay these bills during the semester allows extra money for food, transportation and partying of course.

Any loose change you may have in your backpack, car, purse or room, put it in a coin jar. This money will eventually add up. I used to call it my emergency stash. I mostly used it for washing clothes, food and gas when I was waiting for my next pay day.

Collecting coupons isn't only something that old people do. That little bit of money saved may seem like a lot when you're on a budget. Go through your local newspaper or mail and see what you can find. There are also coupons online.

Social Life

This tip is for the 21 years old and over crowd: According to the magazine article "118 ways to Manage Money in College," college students on average spend about \$5.5 billion on alcohol, mostly beer.

Nothing wrong with having a small kickback or throwing a party from time to time. But why not do it the cheap way? Students tend to buy liquor bottles one by one, not knowing that if you buy them in bulk you can get a cheaper deal on numerous bottles. Also, when you throw your next party or get together you will already be prepared.

If you hate beer or strong alcohol and you're more of a laid back person, you can always result to wine. Wine also comes cheap, always look at your options before buying the first thing you see. Again, only use these tips if you're 21+!

When going out with friends to a restaurant or bar, try buying the food in one large serving and splitting the bill evenly amongst everyone. This way everyone's meal is cheaper and no one is left out.

If you must go shopping, try to go during a good sale week like a tax free week or on a holiday like black Friday.

Food

The top priority in a student's life is food. If you live on campus always use your meal plan. Why? Well because you're paying for it and because it will save you money and time from buying groceries and cooking.

Try to skip the fast foods. Being a college student can be stressful. You don't want to add any unhealthy foods into your body that will increase your blood pressure or make you gain weight. Also, always

Manage your money to avoid being a starving student

eating out is a lot on your budget and if you don't live on campus, try bringing lunch to school.

Affordable healthy snacks like yogurt, crackers, and peanut butter can be something you can study with or eat when you can't sleep at night. Also, try buying a filter for your faucet to prevent from having to buy bottled water.

Along with eating healthy there's exercising. Fortunately, exercising is completely free! Take a couple hours out of your day to go for a walk around campus or go for a run on the track. The more oxygen and blood that pumps to the brain allows for you to think clearer when studying or taking an exam.

Living off Campus

Getting a studio apartment or finding a roommate can cut down the cost for rent and utilities. Find an apartment that is near the school to prevent from using a lot of gas and find a room-

mate that you get along with who can afford their part of the rent. Also, make sure your roommate can provide their own transportation back and forth to school.

Try not to spend a lot of money of décor and accessories. Go to places like Walmart or Value City for furniture.

Be mindful of the amount of electricity and water you use when doing things in your everyday life at home. When you leave the room, cut the light off and, rather than washing the dishes in the dishwasher, wash them by hand. Try not to take really long showers and remember to unplug things when you're done using them.

Ask your parents for furniture. The most that can happen is that they say no.

Lastly, pay your bills on time! This prevents late fees and helps to build your credit.

Following these tips can set you on a path to a solid financial future.

