

Your Monthly Budget

What gets measured
gets improved.

Budgeting Tips



1

Low fixed expenses = more freedom.

What you commit your money to each month matters because it determines how much freedom you have in other areas of your finances. Try to keep your fixed expenses under 50% of your take home pay.

2

Keep your car payment low.

Drive something reliable but don't let your car payment eat too much of your paycheck. Get your payment under 5% of your take-home pay.

3

Keep your rent or mortgage low.

Live comfortably but don't make yourself financially uncomfortable in doing so. Keep your housing payment under 30% of your take-home pay (or 20% if you are paying off debt).

4

Track your expenses weekly.

Figure out how much you can spend each week after your bills are paid. Then track your variable (flex) expenses each week. Make trade-offs in your flex budget when things don't go as planned.

5

Use your credit card like a debit card.

It's OK to put flex expenses on a credit card but pay the full balance each month to avoid interest charges. To keep things simple, stick to 1 card, set a budget for that card and pay it off in full.

6

Don't forget about irregular expenses.

These expenses don't repeat every month (haircuts, gifts etc.), but you should plan for them. Every 90 days, add up your irregular expenses and divide by 3. Set that money aside each month so it's there when you need it.

7

Check your FUEL.

At the end of the month, check your Financial FUEL. Did you hit 10% of take-home pay? If you did, great work! Apply that FUEL to your next Tank. If you didn't, where did you overspend? Where can you make adjustments?

1 Make your budget using these 3 columns.

Budgeted

Fill this out before the month begins.

This is your estimate of what your expenses will be in the coming month. It's ok if it's not 100% accurate. It's a process.

Actual

Fill this out at the end of the month.

Look at your credit card or bank statement to tally your spending in the past month. Be careful to correctly categorize each expense.

Difference

Do the math.

This column tells you where you have the tendency to go over budget. These numbers can help you tweak your categories for the next month.

2 Estimate and calculate your FUEL.

Budgeted FUEL

You can fill out this goal in the beginning of the month. This number is the projected dollar amount in your bank account, after your expenses are paid. A good rule of thumb is to target 10% of your overall income as FUEL.

Actual FUEL

This is what it's all about! Your FUEL is your leftover money that you can put to work! Remember, FUEL should be used to complete the tank that you're on - whether that's debt pay off, student loans, retirement savings, etc., use this money to make progress on your financial goals.

Sample Budget



Income

How much do you make each month? List your income here.

Description	Budgeted		Actual		Difference	
	What do you expect to earn?		What did you earn?		Actual minus Budgeted	
Paycheck #1		\$1,500		\$1,500		
Paycheck #2		\$1,500		\$1,500		
Other _____						
Other _____						
Other _____						
Total	Box A	\$3,000	Box B	\$3,000	Box C	\$0

Fixed Expenses

How much money **must** leave your bank each month? List those expenses here.

Description	Budgeted		Actual		Difference	
	What do you expect to spend?		What did you spend?		Actual minus Budgeted	
Rent/Mortgage		\$1100		\$1100		
Utilities		\$50		\$65		-\$15
Cell Phone		\$40		\$40		
Cable/Internet		\$25		\$25		
Car Insurance		\$65		\$65		
Life Insurance		\$25		\$25		
Daycare		\$0		\$0		
Tithing/Giving		\$100		\$100		
Medical Co-Pays/Prescriptions		\$75		\$75		
Gym Membership		\$25		\$25		
Car Payment (minimum)		\$500		\$500		
Student Loan Payment (minimum)		\$400		\$400		
Credit Card Payments (minimum)		\$25		\$25		
Other Debt Payments (minimum)						
Other _____						
Other _____						
Total	Box D	\$2,430	Box E	\$2,445	Box F	-\$15

THIS MEANS YOU WERE
\$15 OVER BUDGET

Flex Expenses

How much money do you spend on controllable expenses? List those expenses here.

Description	Budgeted What do you plan to spend?	Actual What did you spend?	Difference Actual minus Budgeted
Groceries	\$300	\$312	-\$12
Eating Out	\$30	\$15	\$15
Gas for Car	\$100	\$125	-\$25
Entertainment	\$20	\$13	\$7
Shopping	\$25	\$0	\$25
Travel	\$25	\$30	-\$5
Gifts	\$50	\$25	\$25
Hobbies			
Other _____			
Other _____			
Other _____			
Other _____			
Other _____			
Other _____			
Other _____			
Other _____			
Total	Box G \$550	Box H \$520	Box I \$30

THIS MEANS YOU WERE \$30 UNDER BUDGET



Here's what left. Use your FUEL to fill the tank you're on.

Monthly Budget



Income

How much do you make each month? List your income here.

Description	Budgeted What do you expect to earn?	Actual What did you earn?	Difference Actual minus Budgeted
Paycheck #1			
Paycheck #2			
Other _____			
Other _____			
Other _____			
Total	Box A	Box B	Box C

Fixed Expenses

How much money **must** leave your bank each month? List those expenses here.

Description	Budgeted What do you expect to spend?	Actual What did you spend?	Difference Actual minus Budgeted
Rent/Mortgage			
Utilities			
Cell Phone			
Cable/Internet			
Car Insurance			
Life Insurance			
Daycare			
Tithing/Giving			
Medical Co-Pays/Prescriptions			
Gym Membership			
Car Payment (minimum)			
Student Loan Payment (minimum)			
Credit Card Payments (minimum)			
Other Debt Payments (minimum)			
Other _____			
Other _____			
Total	Box D	Box E	Box F

