



Overcoming Financial Strain

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Financial strain is probably the biggest cause of stress, especially in today's economy. With so many people losing their jobs, just trying to make ends meet can cause added stress to your already stressful lives. The good news is that there's a way out!

Map Out a Plan

If you are not on a budget, you *must* get on one. I know the word budget seems like a *bad word*, and it does require effort and planning, but it is the best way to relieve financial stress. ***Living on a budget means you're in control of your money, instead of your money controlling you.***

There are many classes or programs specifically designed to teach you how to budget if needed. Simply do a search online using the terms "how to live on a budget" or "budgeting" and you're sure to find one that meets your needs and is easy to use.

The key to sticking to a budget is making sure it's easy to implement. Ask your friends and relatives what budgeting plans or programs they use and do a little research before deciding on one. But whatever you do, choose something!

Good Food at Great Prices

Another area where you can save money is at the grocery store. ***By using online and paper coupons, as well as flipping through the weekly flyers, you can save hundreds of dollars every month!*** Again, this takes some planning, but it will help relieve a lot of financial strain.

Knowing how much you spend on eating out may be a shocker to you. Cut back on restaurant food and plan more meals at home. You'll be surprised at how much money you'll save and you may even lose a few pounds!

Review Your Automatic Payments

Cutting out automatic payments from your spending will also help you be in control of your money. Look at any programs or services that you've subscribed to that automatically takes money from your account. You may find some you never use that you can cut out. Or perhaps there are better deals to be had elsewhere, so do your research!

Choose Used

One of the best ways to reduce your expenses is by driving a used car. ***If you're making a car payment, you're throwing away money that could be better used elsewhere.*** If it's possible, sell your car, pay it off, and buy a used car with the cash that you're saving on monthly payments. You may have to give up a little pride, but reducing stress and financial strain is far more important than pride!

Tips to Reducing Financial Strain in Your Life

Other ways to overcome financial strain is to supplement your income. You can do this in a variety of ways. Some of them you may even find fun!

- De-clutter your home of "stuff" by sorting through and selling it on eBay, Craigslist, or Kijiji.
- Clean out your shed or garage and have a yard sale.
- Sell arts and crafts or jewelry on Etsy or eBay.
- Start an online business using skills you already have.
- If you're good at a particular subject, start tutoring or teaching music lessons.
- If you're a golfer or skier, get a second job at a resort or golf club. This will not only bring in extra income, but they probably offer discounts to employees, saving you money while still being able to enjoy something you love.
- Get a second job that offers flexible hours. Use the extra income to pay down debt or start saving for your emergency fund.

Having a plan, sticking to a budget, and increasing your income are the best ways to overcome financial strain during these tough economic times. If you're diligent and determined not to let today's economy stress you out, you're sure to succeed!