



Reach Your Financial Goals

February is the perfect time to check on those New Year's Resolutions. You're either on a roll, or you've lost some motivation. And, it's okay if you have – It's still early enough in the year to get back on track and consider how to improve in the coming months.

If you created a financial checklist with achievable short and long-term goals, you should assess how January went and how you can improve in the months ahead. Then, take an in-depth look at your budget and spending habits to adjust your plans accordingly.

According to [Living Well Spending Less](#), February is a great time to find items you've been searching for at deep discounts. With winter ending and spring just on the horizon, it's smart to watch for deals on coats, boots, and other warm accessories. Then, keep these items on hand so you're ready for next winter. Other seasonal items like snow blowers and winter sports equipment will also likely be on sale in February. Pay attention to hardware stores for additional discounts. They are trying to get rid of winter stock in order to make room for spring merchandise. And with football season ending, sports team apparel and TVs for the big game are expected to go on sale.

Check out these additional tips for a successful financial year:

Focus on saving. Life can throw unexpected curveballs, so it's essential to have money in savings for last-minute surprises. Establishing a savings plan can help you start building positive financial habits. For example, transfer a set amount into your savings account each payday and don't touch it unless it's an emergency. It's typically wise to have at least \$1,000 in an emergency fund, but the more you can save, the better.

Pick up the phone to reduce bills. Proactively calling bill collectors and utility companies may be uncomfortable, but there is no shame in asking for help. You'd be surprised how many bills are actually negotiable. It's best to be honest and explain that you are looking to lower your monthly expenses. Use the phrase, "Is that the best offer you can provide," and be polite on the phone. Customer service employees want to help, so make the call and see what they can do to assist you.

Spend less on groceries. With rising food prices, this may sound impossible. But it can be done! Follow a shopping list and create a meal plan to help ensure you're not overspending or wasting food. Some of the best ways to cut grocery costs are to use coupons or stockpile non-perishable and frozen food items when they go on sale. Most grocery stores have a website showing coupons and weekly ads. Try planning meals based on what items are on sale, and then see if there are any corresponding coupons so you can save even more.

Even though February is the shortest month, make it sweet by sticking to your goals, being smart with your money, and planning for the future.