

## Transcript

# Ways to save money on your monthly bills

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Finding ways to save money may be easier than you think. By setting aside just a few hours –or an afternoon every now and then– to do a little research on some of your biggest monthly expenses, you may be able to save hundreds, maybe thousands of dollars a year. Here are some ideas to get you started saving on some of your bigger expenses- things like television, cell phones, utilities and insurance.

[Visual Title: Television]

[Save- \$50-\$500/yr ]

Almost everybody loves television and it's no secret that services such as satellite or cable TV can be pricey. Thinking about how you use your TV could be a good way to start trimming expenses.

For example, you may consider switching to antenna TV. The technology has come a long way since the days of bunny ears, and so has the quality of the picture. The FCC has an interactive map that shows which channels you might get in your zip code. Check out [fcc.gov](http://fcc.gov) to find out more.

[visual of [www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov) search term "digital television"]

Combining antenna TV with the occasional movie rental, or an online streaming service– like those web-based services that have shows and

movies that you can binge-watch all weekend might cost you a little bit up front, but it could save you hundreds of dollars over the course of a year.

[visual of small cost for initial investment of tv antenna/ large savings over the course of a year]

Now, if you decide to go with satellite or cable– shop around and negotiate. You may find a cheaper option, or your current provider may be willing to lower your monthly payment to keep you as a satisfied customer. A couple of phone calls could save you money each month.

[Visual Title: Phone]

[Save- \$50-\$300/yr ]

Speaking of phone calls, you may want to look at your cell phone plan to see if you can cut down on costs there too. Data and texting plans can be expensive, so make sure your plan reflects how much – or how little you use your phone. You might also make some changes to your habits that could help you trim costs. If you use a smartphone, there are apps that allow you to track your data usage and even set alarms when you get close to a monthly limit. By avoiding large downloads on the go,

[visual of individual watching and closing out of a movie on their phone]

you might be able to scale back your plan.

Pre-paid plans might also be a money saving option. Or you might consider a Family plan if you have more than one person in your household. Just

remember, as with anything, pay attention to all the details of the plan when shopping around for deals.

Finally, if you need to use a phone for your work, you might consider checking with your employer to see if they might cover your cell phone expenses. Or, if you're self employed, you might be able to get a tax deduction for your phone expenses.

[Visual Title: Home]

[Save- \$0-\$600/yr ]

Next, let's look at housing– it's probably your biggest expense.

If you rent, you might be able to ask your landlord about giving you a better deal when it's time to renew. Take a look at the going rate for similar apartments in your area to see if it makes sense to renegotiate. Most landlords don't want the vacancy that comes with a turnover, so if you've been a good tenant, they may be willing to work with you.

And when it comes to household expenses, energy can be a big one, particularly if you're a homeowner:

[Save- \$0-\$200/yr ]

A programmable thermostat is one way you can save. They're relatively easy to install and they can help you save significantly on your heating and cooling bill by raising and lowering the temperature automatically when you're not at home or when you're asleep.

You can go one step further by getting an energy audit of your home.

Your utility company may offer free energy audits that can give you valuable ideas on how to save on your energy bill that are specific to your home.

You can start to find out more and get additional tips on saving energy from the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star website at [EnergyStar.gov](http://EnergyStar.gov).

[Visual Title: Insurance]

Another place you may be able to save big is on your insurance.

[Save- \$0-\$300 ]

Many people bundle their policies, such as homeowner's and auto insurance with one carrier. That can often bring substantial discounts. You might also cut some insurance costs by making upgrades to your home – like installing a security system.

[Save- \$0-\$1000 ]

And if it's been a few years since you have shopped for insurance, you may want to shop around instead of just renewing. This can be particularly helpful on health insurance if you're responsible for buying your own insurance since the prices of these plans change frequently.

There are several websites where you can compare plans and prices. But pay attention to what the plan offers and the details, such as premiums, deductible amounts and co-payments... the least expensive option may end up costing you more if it doesn't cover what you need.

It may be hard to get started, but just a little bit of research and a couple of phone calls could make a big difference in your budget almost right away.

[visual of person making a date in their calendar to research plans]

And sure, spending an afternoon researching your monthly expenses may not be as thrilling as, say, a day at the beach, but rolling up your sleeves and doing some work on this may help you save hundreds, maybe thousands of dollars each year. That's money you might spend on a vacation... at a beach...