

Saving is Smart for All Ages

Americans may be contemplating that now is the time to get serious about their savings. All too often saving money is something reserved for times when a person has a portion of extra cash. By making a few minor changes to spending habits, you can make saving money become a regular habit. Whether saving to meet a long-range goal or looking for something short term, SNBT has a few savings tips.

Commit to a savings goal. Set goals to save for specific large purchases. Decide what to save for and keep reminders around the house such as notes placed on the refrigerator or pictures of the item in a checkbook.

Monitor spending patterns. Start by tracking the things that are purchased monthly, weekly, and even daily. Pin-pointing spending patterns will help to determine areas to cut back on; it will also help determine your needs versus wants.

Make a budget. Budgeting, a small but important alteration in spending habits, is the key to making financial adjustments that can increase savings. Create a monthly budget allocating money for regular bills, unexpected expenses, and even fun money.

Pay yourself first. Commit to saving a specific dollar amount or percentage of income every pay period. By waiting to see what's left over, you'll be less likely to save. Arrange for an automatic money transfer from your paycheck to a savings account. If the money is taken out before you cash your check, chances are you won't spend it.

Consult your Personal Banker. A Personal Banker is the best source of information about accounts and interest rates. They will be able to recommend the right account to help reach savings goals. Once you reach certain savings levels you may be eligible for higher interest rates.

Consider investments. For long-term goals, such as saving for a college or retirement, you could look into bonds, mutual funds, real estate and stocks. Consult an investment advisor about what would work best for you.

Shop around. There are thousands of options for financial services. Be selective, and get the best prices, services, convenient locations, and lowest fees for credit cards, bank accounts, mortgages, and CDs. A great way to research is by calling the financial institutions in the area and requesting a rate sheet. This will give you a list of the interest rates currently paid on all accounts and CDs. You can also ask friends and relatives for their recommendations; often this will give a few good leads.