



## 5 SPRING CLEANING TIPS FOR YOUR FINANCES

Much like cleaning your home as we head into spring, polishing off your finances should also be a priority this season. The goal is simple -- spring cleaning your finances can give you peace of mind by taking charge of this vital aspect of life.

### 1. Organize, organize, and organize.

We recommend a dedicated space for storing your financial documents, as well as neatly organizing them by type. An effective filing system also means maintaining both physical and electronic storage, as well as capturing backup copies in the case of a disaster. Unless your space is minimal, a good rule of thumb is to store documents for seven years as it coincides with tax purposes.

### 2. Pay down debt.

Debt has a cumulative result which some may refer to as the 'snowball effect' and the sooner you begin to tackle it, the better. Priority on the debt management journey should go to debts with the highest interest rates. Even if you can only put down a small amount, set a goal and stick to it. For some this may mean exchanging higher rate credit cards for lower rate cards (and perhaps forgoing benefits like travel points); for others, it may be an extra mortgage payment at the end of the year. In either scenario, lessening any debt load can make a significant difference in your finances.

### 3. Set a budget and commit to it.

Setting a budget is often a challenging task, but it doesn't have to be. Look through your past costs and try to figure out what you spend on various living expenses. Draft up a budget and make amends if you need to. Most important is to keep yourself accountable, and if you struggle with accountability, many apps available for free can send you alerts when you near your limits or go over budget.

### 4. Have an investment strategy.

"Paying yourself first" is a financial motto propagated with the idea to encourage people to save more (and spend less!). However, if you are committed to staying on top of your finances, you need to go a step further and use savings as a springboard for future earnings. Money in the bank today needs to keep pace with inflation so that down the road it can provide a similar standard of living to your current lifestyle.

### 5. Automate recurring tasks.

Automating your recurring financial tasks can lead to operational efficiencies in your life. If a job is faster and more accurate when performed by technology, it is better left to machines. Bill alerts, automatic withdrawals, budget trackers -- these are invaluable tools to utilize to help you stay on top.



## HOW TO GET PAID FASTER

*"Until you value yourself, you won't value your time. Until you value your time, you will not do anything with it." ~ M. Scott Peck*

For this InfoPays, we list tips for getting paid faster:

### 1. Keep track of your time.

Stay organized and document your hours accurately to ensure that you get compensated for your efforts fairly. In the end, time is money.

### 2. Bill early.

After wrapping up a project, try to send out your bills immediately. Avoid moving on to the next task without notifying your client or customer of payment due.

### 3. Use simple terminology.

"NET 30/60/90" is a common invoice jargon; however, experience shows that this terminology may, in the end, be confusing your clients. Keep it simple by stating the number of days that your invoices become due.

### 4. Charge an upfront fee or request partial payment.

A retainer fee provides a guarantee and gives your cash flow a boost. During the planning stages, enthusiasm is the driving sentiment so at this point sponsors tend to be more flexible about payment terms – if you are asking for a partial payment, this is a perfect time.

### 5. Set up payment reminders.

Establish a simple system to keep track of overdue accounts and release payment notifications. It is vital to detect potential delinquency sooner rather than later.



### 6. Make the payment process simple and easy.

If you make bill paying complicated or nonintuitive, you are guaranteed to lose your client's attention. Try to provide your clients with convenient options for payment, ideally electronic methods.

### 7. Ensure accurate billing.

Be sure that your bills reflect all the correct information, especially the current balance and the appropriate receiving party. Customers are more likely to avoid payment of bills that contain errors and discrepancies.

### 8. Be professional and courteous.

Being courteous is not just the right thing to do – it is a powerful tactic that can help you get paid faster. A simple "please pay your invoice within" or "thank you for your business" can increase your payment success.

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