Mastering Money Management in College

Want to do a better job of managing your money? Try these easy suggestions!

1. Track It! Track your spending for two to four weeks to find out where your money is going. You may be surprised to see how much you spend on little things that you probably do not need. Plus, simply tracking expenses has been shown to slow one’s spending.

2. Make a Plan! One of the best ways to manage money over the course of a quarter is to sit down and map out a budget. Make a list of your sources of income (scholarships, loans, earnings from job(s), money from family, etc.) as well as expenses (fees, books, groceries, etc.).

3. Allocate "Fun" Money! If you know you need to buy a new CD or go to a concert or party every week, make room for that in your budget.

4. Pace Yourself! If you spend, spend, spend at the beginning of the quarter, you could be tapped out later. Set a spending limit for each week - and stick to it. If all goes well, you shouldn’t have to eat ramen every day in June.

5. Go Easy with the Credit Cards! One quick way to live beyond your budget is to reach for the credit card. "I saw a student pick up a bag of chips and charge it," says Mallary Tytel, president of Healthy Workplaces. Who wants to pay interest on a bag of Doritos?

6. Set your own Credit Line! Recognize that your credit limit is not a finish line. Charge only what you know you can pay back. If you’re afraid you’ll spend as long as there's room on your card, call your credit card company and request your limit be lowered. Keep at it -- Card companies will try boost up your credit line so you will spend more. Tell them "no" each time they try.

7. Look Ahead! Whether it’s a road trip with friends or an auto insurance bill, if you know a big expense is coming, start putting aside some money to pay for it. It’s a lot easier to set aside a little bit each month than to come up with $300 when a major bill is due.

8. Ask for Help when Needed! It can be difficult to admit that you have landed in a bad financial situation. Muster up some courage and ask for help from parents or a trusted friend. The longer you put it off, the worse things will get.

(Excerpted from Bankrate.com, Article by Lucy Lazarony)