

News Release

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Keeping holiday credit card use under control

The holidays are often the season to spend, spend, spend. To avoid post-holiday bills blues, take steps now to keep this year's holiday spending in control. It may be hard to resist the enticing opportunities to add to your credit card debt this year, but doing so is the secret to keeping holiday spending in check."

Here are five tips to help keep your holiday spending under control:

1. Stop carrying your credit card with you. The average household has ten credit cards. If your credit card is not in your wallet or purse, you are less likely to spend on impulse, allowing you time to find other creative solutions other than incurring more debt.
2. Plan a spending limit. This includes a plan to repay any debt created. Make a list of the items you intend to purchase with your credit card. Once you have decided on your holiday spending priorities, find creative ways to help yourself stay with your decisions. One tool you can use during times of stress and high demand on your finances is to remember to breathe and take a moment to reflect. This can help revitalize personal energy so you stay focused on your original financial intent. This is especially helpful just before you make a purchase. Shoppers with a credit card available are likely to spend 34 percent more.
3. Discuss your intended use of your credit card with another person to help you brainstorm other alternatives. It can be difficult to access creative strategies and problem solving skills when you feel anxious and stressed. Talking to a person who is not going to judge, but will partner with you in finding alternative solutions can be very helpful.
4. Paying off your credit card debt over time may also keep you from using the card. Sometimes when people pay off substantial credit card debt all at once it creates a false sense of wealth, and the debt is reestablished within a year or two (this is called recycling debt). If that has been your experience, pay off your credit card balances over time, allowing time for behavioral changes.
5. Give yourself a 24-hour "cooling off" period before making a purchase. This works especially well, especially with catalog purchases. The next day they are not quite as appealing.

Enjoy finding creative ways to protect your finances during this active season. Stay focused and begin the New Year without those post-holiday spending blues.

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