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MONEY WI$E

VALUING PEOPLE. VALUING MONEY.
MANAGING IN TOUGH TIMES INITIATIVE

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

EXERCISING ON A BUDGET

Regular exercise has the potential to save you thousands of dollars in health care costs. According to the World Health Organization, physically active people save an average of $500 annually on health care. However, these savings can quickly disappear if you spend hundreds of dollars on gym memberships and the latest and greatest workout equipment and clothing. There are many ways that you can save on exercise related costs, some of which are discussed below.

- **Find free ways to exercise**. The great news is that exercise does not require any financial investment! There are a number of physical activities that you can do in your home and community that do not cost a penny. Walking around your neighborhood, dancing at home, or even activities like gardening are all great options. If you are more interested in getting outside of your home, many local churches and organizations offer exercise classes at little or no cost.

- Be wary of gym memberships. You should invest in a gym membership only if you plan to use it. Many people fall into the trap of paying for a monthly gym membership without actually using the facility. If you are interested in a gym membership, be on the lookout for specials – many gyms offer reduced rates when you sign up with a family member or friend. Also, do not be afraid to negotiate. Most gyms would rather have you as a customer than watch you walk away over the cost.

- Use the Internet. There are a number of free exercise classes offered online. If it is difficult to get out of your home for some reason such as finding child care, online classes are a great option. Online classes are also a great way to vary your usual workout routine and introduce yourself to new exercises.

- Fitness apps. If you are a smartphone user, be on the lookout for free fitness apps. There are a number of free apps designed to help you keep track of your fitness or that offer free exercise routines.

- Buy inexpensive workout equipment. There is no reason to spend hundreds or even thousands of dollars on workout equipment. Jump ropes, dumbbells, exercise balls, and resistance bands are all cheap and effective workout equipment. If you are interested in a more costly piece of workout equipment such as a treadmill, look at your local newspaper or the Internet for used equipment. You'll be pleasantly surprised at the quality of the used equipment that you can buy.

- Shop at discount retailers for workout apparel. Discount retailers will be your best bet for buying workout apparel and shoes at the best price. If there is a specific brand that you like, consider signing up for email alerts about sales.

- Join a local intramural team. If you are interested in playing an intramural sport such as soccer, basketball, or softball, be on the lookout for a local intramural team. Joining a team is a great way to exercise while meeting other people.

Exercise is essential to good health. Fortunately, there is no reason to break the bank when you are planning your exercise routine. Use the tips mentioned above and be mindful of other ways that you can save money while doing activities that you enjoy both at home and in your community.

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