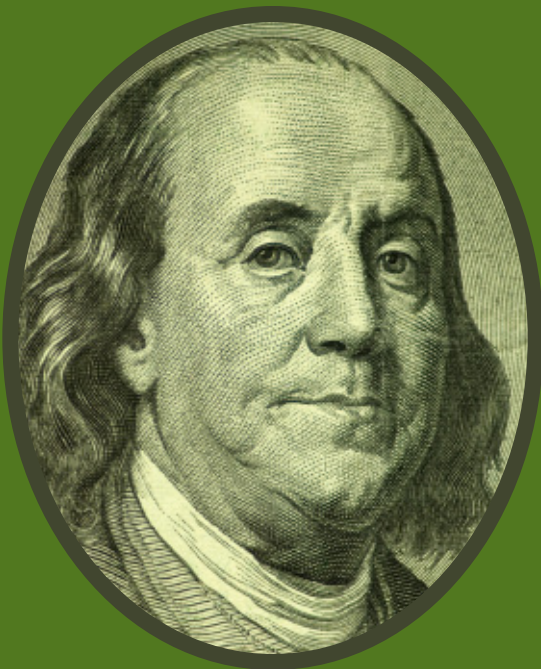


Get on A Budget!

By
Eric J. Gruber



**A how-to guide
for controlling your money ***

* Instead of your money controlling you

Get On A Budget!

By Eric J. Gruber

getonabudget.com

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Introduction

When I entered my final year of high school, I had some flexibility for choosing classes to finish up my senior year. I had already taken two math classes that were challenging enough for me – algebra and geometry – but decided on one more to get me through until graduation.

The class I chose was called Consumer Math, which had the reputation of being ... simple. That was fine with me. I wanted something easy enough it wouldn't bog me down as I prepared for college, but had some challenging work to keep me engaged until I left the halls of my alma mater.

The class was pretty basic; things you'd be responsible for every day of your life. Topics like balancing your checkbook, reading bills and even getting familiar with maps and driving directions were covered. It was everything you would expect from a class called Consumer Math.

I don't remember too much about the class. To be fair, I don't remember a great deal about my algebra and geometry classes either. It all pretty much stayed that way – being in the dark about the math I was using (or should have been using) every day – until sometime around 2003.

I got married. As a result, some of the terrible habits about how I handled my money finally rose to the surface. One of the awful truths I decided to confront was the debt I was bringing to the household. Money I owed to family members – a car loan, other consumer loans, credit cards, and the always-present student loan payment responsibilities – needed to be brought under control.

Another of my terrible habits that came to light was just as sinister. I had absolutely no idea how to

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put together, or live by, a simple household budget.

Not only did I not know how to use a budget, but I also had an addiction to plastic. It's not what you think. Credit cards were a part of my life at that time but they weren't what I would consider "spiraling out of control." Instead, I had a different type of plastic addiction – my bank's debit card. This, combined with not using a budget, was nickel and diming our finances to death.

"What is all of this?" my wife said to me one day after the bank statement came in the mail. There it was, a paper trail detailing almost everywhere I had been and everything I had purchased daily during the previous month. From a less-than-nutritious breakfast on the way to work, a soft drink in a convenience store, lunch at a local grocer near my office, to anything else I had purchased, all of the transactions were made with my debit card. It was prolific.

I didn't have a clue where my money was going. In reality, I really didn't even know how much money we had from week to week.

I've examined my financial missteps from the last decade, and I've come to a very grave conclusion: I was lucky. I don't know how I made it through college or my single years as a working stiff without going completely bankrupt. Sadly, there is plenty of evidence to suggest there are many others who are now as I once was.

You're no dummy. We've all seen the beatdown the economy has taken lately. It's a mess. From the upper-most levels of government to the smallest households, we've lost our focus. We're in debt, scared we'll lose our jobs and everyone is stressed out waiting for this ship to turn around. Sometimes, it seems like no one is even at the wheel.

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That's a bit gloomy. The whole situation reminds me of this joke from the United States Navy [website archives](#):

US Ship: *Please divert your course 0.5 degrees to the south to avoid a collision.*

Canadian National Defense reply: *Recommend you divert your course 15 degrees to the South to avoid a collision.*

US Ship: *This is the Captain of a US Navy Ship. I say again, divert your course.*

Canadian National Defense reply: *No. I say again, you divert YOUR course!*

US Ship: *THIS IS THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER USS CORAL SEA; WE ARE A LARGE WARSHIP OF THE US NAVY. DIVERT YOUR COURSE NOW!!*

Canadian National Defense reply: *This is a lighthouse. Your call.*

That was exactly how I used to be. I was stubborn and on a collision course. How about you?

Since you're reading this, I presume you're serious about finding a way to learn how to get on a budget. I know where you're coming from, and I can tell you that once you learn how easy it is to get on a budget, your life will improve! Ultimately, it's your call. There is nothing magic in these pages. Once you learn the method, it's up to you to do the work to make results happen.

The payoff can be huge. In many cases, the simple act of starting a budget can make you feel like

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you got a raise. You'll find new ways to save money, better ways to adjust for those large monthly payments, and even find you have been neglecting some other areas, too.

Using the budgeting method you'll learn in the chapters to come, coupled with a debt-reduction plan, my household was able to pay off close to \$20,000 in debt while keeping our sanity in under two years. We're a dual-income household, so your mileage may vary, but the potential is there for a similar outcome.

I have helped friends and family work to get on a budget using the process laid out in this e-book, with great success. I love to see the victories that budgeting gives them – saving for something they want, getting out of debt, removing the anxiety of bill paying and more. I look forward to hearing your success story as well.

Please feel free to drop me a line to the contact information at the end of this book and tell me your story.

Getting on a budget isn't about the goal; it's also about the journey. This isn't one of those things that you are going to want to do for a little while then give up when you reach your goal. Budgeting will impact your life in such a fantastic way. It will become an effective tool in your personal finance toolbox to help you become financially fit.

There are many books available to teach you about personal finances. If you've got time to trudge through another 300 pages to learn yet another theory about how to get a grip on your money while your finances suffer in the meantime, you should close this e-book right now. This e-book is about precision, quality, and action. The **Get On A Budget!** method in this e-book provides you with an inexpensive yet practical way to help you get control of your money NOW.

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Does my family still have debt? Yes, we owe one last creditor, but our budget is a key element to help us with that continuing process of debt elimination, month after month. In addition, in the last three years, I've had the privilege of becoming "daddy" to two beautiful girls, and can honestly say that our budgeting is crucial to helping raise them in a good environment while living below our means.

I absolutely can't wait until I get the chance to teach my little girls about money and budgeting, with the hope they'll avoid the mistakes I made and live a richer, more fulfilled life.

But first, let's start with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eric J. Gruber". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Eric J. Gruber

June 2009

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How Did We Get Here?

Budget.

Is it a dirty word? I don't think so. Dirty words get talked about. They're censored. Or, they're thrown around carelessly. They get noticed. Dirty words get lots of attention.

But a frank discussion about money and budgeting seems to have been missing from a lot of our conversations for such a long time.

Here are the facts:

Financial literacy is declining among high school seniors. In a 2008 survey on financial literacy, only 48.3 percent of those surveyed correctly answered the questionnaire.¹

In addition, college graduates will enter the workforce with an average of \$19,237 in student loan debt.²

What this means is, less than half of those who graduate from high school won't know what to do with the money they earn.

Of that same pool of graduates, neither will those who go to college.

Here's what the United States Department of Education has said about the declining financial literacy in America:

¹ [JumpStart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy 2008 Survey](#)

² ["Student Loan Debt Exploding Nationwide", Expert Business Source, April 28, 2008](#)

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“Over the past decade, literacy among college graduates has actually declined. Unacceptable numbers of college graduates enter the workforce without the skills employers say they need in an economy where, as the truism holds correctly, knowledge matters more than ever.”³

If you don't know how to budget, you shouldn't beat yourself up about it. It seems pretty clear that in the United States we haven't made education about personal finances a priority. From the looks of our battered economy, it shows.

But let's look past the past. It's time to take control. Quite literally, the buck starts here.

Learning Method, Not Manuals

There are loads of expensive tools available to “help you budget.” Some people love to use Intuit's Quicken. Others have sworn by Microsoft Money. An internet search will bring up plenty of software publishers, large and small, whose software program just might be what you're looking for.

There are even online services with many of the same features as their software counterparts. One great service is from Mint.com, which tracks all your transactions, then allows you to categorize how your money has been spent. Intuit has a similar service with Quicken Online.

Before I knew any better, I spent a decent amount of money on several pieces of computer software that essentially did the same thing. I spent hundreds of dollars trying out software to get my personal finances under control. The problem I found with pre-packaged budgeting software was that they had two significant flaws.

First of all, the software wasn't very flexible. I needed something that could change at a moment's notice without being clunky. Software that tied into my checking account wasn't always accurate with scenarios relevant to my life, and having to make adjustments based on the software's suggestions instead of what worked in real-life would mess up the whole thing.

Secondly, and more importantly, a lot of budgeting software tells you where your money went instead of giving you complete power to tell it where to go. Sure, you might get pretty charts and graphs, but what good is that at the end of the month?

That's not to say there isn't a benefit in software or an online service. Personally, I subscribe to Mint.com's service and love the features it has for comparing my family's spending habits to those in other areas across the country. The service works great as a supplement to a budgeting regimen, but it's not core to becoming financially fit. It's a neat tool with pretty graphs. But with all the bells and whistles, it's still not good enough to help a family of four maintain a middle income household budget. Instead, the **Get On A Budget!** method has served my family very well for more than five years. It will serve your household just as well.

Get On A Budget! isn't about learning how to use software (although software is involved), but rather learning a methodology to put into place so you can make a lifestyle change. Whether you choose to use the software-based tools discussed in this e-book, or you decide to write it out with pencil and paper and keep it in your favorite notebook, this method will work (provided your math is right on the paper version!).

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Tracking Your Spending

Before You Get Started

Constructing a good budget requires a bit of trial and error when you first get started.

Many who struggle with budgeting don't really know where they spend their money throughout the month. I know I didn't. The trick is to find out where you have been spending your money so you can make adjustments.

Before you get into the technical aspects of creating your budget, you need to do a little tracking first. Whether in a spreadsheet, a word processing file, or a plain piece of paper, write down all of your expenses for 30 days.

Yes, all of them.

Be as detailed as possible. If you go to the store, don't just put "Target, \$50," for example. Instead, write what items you purchased and how much they each cost, such as "Target, \$10 for socks; \$30 for shoes; \$10 for two gallons of milk."

Thirty days might seem like a long time to track your expenses, but the time frame is perfect for getting a snapshot of how money flows through your life. If you're antsy to get started, this amount can be trimmed down to 15 days.

There's a slight risk that you'll miss some of your usual monthly expenses, but it's minimal. It's highly recommended you track for the full 30 days. When you are done tracking spending, you will

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be able to look at where your money is being spent so you can categorize your expenditures. We'll use these categories in the next section.

Track your income for the month. Write down all typical sources of income for your household, and when the income comes in. Is it the first of the month? Every two weeks? Staggered at times? Typically, this is your paycheck.

Don't count extra income such as odd jobs or garage sales. We'll take care of that later.

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Toolbox

Getting Your Tools Together

The **Get On A Budget!** method in this e-book uses spreadsheet software, which you'll need to have available on your computer.

Traditionally, spreadsheet software was only available through expensive software packages such as Microsoft Excel, Lotus 1-2-3, or Apple Numbers. It's possible you already have spreadsheet software installed on your computer. Files are provided in a variety of file formats. At least one of them should work for creating your budget. (As a general rule, almost all spreadsheet programs will open or import Microsoft Excel's .xls file formatted files, which are included in the download.)

Get Free Software with OpenOffice.org

If you don't have spreadsheet software, there's good news (as if you needed any more).

The times have changed. Software options are aplenty, and high-quality, Microsoft-compatible spreadsheet

Your Monthly Budget						
INCOME						
	8/7/2009	8/28/2009	8/31/2009			
Paycheck	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Other Income						
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
CASH WITHDRAWALS						
Clothing			-\$174.00			
Dining			-\$40.00			
Entertainment		-\$100.00				
Gifts			-\$29.00			
Groceries	-\$80.00		-\$80.00			
Haircut						
Maintenance		-\$90.00				
Misc.			-\$2.00			
Pets	-\$20.00					
Spending Money	-\$25.00	-\$25.00				
TOTAL CASH WITHDRAWALS	-\$125.00	-\$215.00	-\$325.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
NON-CASH TRANSACTIONS						
Cable/TV	-\$50.00					
Car Maintenance		-\$30.00				
Cell Phone		-\$80.00				
Credit Card 1			-\$50.00			
Credit Card 2		-\$300.00				
Childcare	-\$300.00					
Electricity	-\$80.00					
Fuel (home)			-\$30.00			
Fuel (gas)	-\$20.00		-\$50.00			
Giving			-\$20.00			
Insurance	-\$45.00					
Medical Bill		-\$30.00				
Misc.	-\$50.00		-\$25.00			
Rent/Mortgage	-\$300.00	-\$325.00				
Trash	-\$30.00					
Water		-\$20.00				
TOTAL NON-CASH TRANSACTIONS	-\$875.00	-\$785.00	-\$175.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
REMAINDER	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
MONTHLY NET REMAINDER	\$0.00					

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software can be downloaded for free for all three major operating system platforms: Microsoft Windows, Mac OS X and Linux's many different flavors, such as Ubuntu.

If you have a high-speed internet connection, DSL or faster, you can download a free software package called OpenOffice.org at <http://openoffice.org>. From the home page, click on "I want to download OpenOffice.org" and find the version for the operating system you're using.

It costs nothing to download OpenOffice.org. The company that creates the software, [Sun Microsystems](#), doesn't even ask for an e-mail or signup information before you download. Click, download and install. The download is rather large - 148 megabytes - so again, please don't download this unless you have a high-speed internet connection. Dial-up users will find the downloading process to be too time-consuming to be worth the effort.

Sun Microsystems provides the software for free, but does accept donations for anyone willing to help keep the project going through monetary gifts. To find out more about donating any amount, visit Sun Microsystems' [donation page](#) for OpenOffice.org.

Online Options

Don't have a high-speed connection? There are options for you as well. Online spreadsheet programs that run in your browser of choice are also available.

Google has a spreadsheet program called [Google Docs](#) which is available at no charge after signing up for a free [Google Account](#). Another company, Zoho, has an excellent spreadsheet program called [Zoho Sheet](#). Both programs are easy to use, of high-quality, and can give traditional spreadsheet programs like the ones mentioned above a run for their money any day.

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If you choose to use an online spreadsheet such as Google Docs or Zoho Sheet, you will need to create an account, then you can upload the Microsoft Excel .xls file included with this e-book. It will work just like you have a spreadsheet computer program installed on your computer, but it will be available from anywhere you have an internet connection.

Whether you choose a traditional software package to create your budget or an online spreadsheet program, either will provide you what you need to get going. There are pros and cons to using a software package versus an online service; you'll have to figure out what works best for your needs and proceed from there.

Traditional software packages

Pros

- Highly customizable to your preferences
- Has other powerful features which you might use for other projects
- Easy to backup files to CDs, flash drives, or e-mailing them to yourself

Cons

- Sharing your document can be problematic with other users
- Possible to create different files with different data and the same name, which could lead to conflicts

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Online spreadsheet programs

Pros

- Mostly just as good as their software package counterparts
- Easy to share documents with others for collaboration
- Backing up of files is almost instantaneous; no need to make copies unless you desire

Cons

- Signup with some personal information (name, e-mail) is required with the service provider
- An internet connection is required to access and use the service

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The Plan

Now that you've charted where your money goes each month, it is finally time to get down to the business of seeing how it all adds up.

Using the spreadsheet program of your choice, open the file with the extension of the program you're using. Included in this packet along with the e-book is the budgeting spreadsheet in three popular formats.

Pick the appropriate format to use with the application you'll be using for your budget.

- .xls format for Microsoft Excel users
- .numbers format for Apple iWork users
- .ods format for OpenOffice.org users

Grab the notebook you've used to track your spending. We'll use that information to fill out the cells in your spreadsheet and begin the budget.

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Add Your Income

Since you can only spend as much as you bring home, let's get started with the income section. In the first row, enter the date of your pay periods for the month. In the row beneath, add the amount of your paycheck for each date you get paid.

If you have additional sources of income other than a paycheck, enter that amount below the amount of your paycheck for the pay period.

INCOME					
	8/1/2008	8/8/2008	8/15/2008	8/22/2008	8/29/2008
Paycheck	\$1,000.00	\$500.00	\$1,000.00	\$500.00	\$1,000.00
Other Income					
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,000.00	\$500.00	\$1,000.00	\$500.00	\$1,000.00

Additional sources might include doing work on the side for extra cash, selling items on Craigslist or eBay, or money received as gifts – not money you could count on with regularity.

If you need additional rows (rows are horizontal), highlight an entire row and insert a new one. In most cases you can right-click and get a menu option, or you can look under the menu at the top of your application and find the appropriate instructions, depending on the application you're using. Insert additional rows above the current one rather than below.

Likewise, if you need additional columns (columns are vertical), highlight the entire column and choose "insert columns" or whatever command is applicable to the program you're using.

The totals for all your income will be in the Total Income row.

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Add the Expenses You Will Pay for With Cash

This section is for those items where you'll be taking cash out of the bank to pay expenses until your next pay period. The spreadsheet will calculate how much money you need to withdraw from the bank, shown in the total cash withdrawals box.

Using the figures from your tracked expenses, determine what you typically spend between pay

CASH WITHDRAWALS					
Clothing			-\$174.00		
Dining			-\$40.00		
Entertainment		-\$100.00			
Gifts			-\$29.00		
Groceries	-\$80.00		-\$80.00		
Haircut					
Maintenance		-\$90.00			
Misc.			-\$2.00		
Pets	-\$20.00				
Spending Money	-\$25.00	-\$25.00			
TOTAL CASH WITHDRAWALS	-\$125.00	-\$215.00	-\$325.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

periods and create categories based on what you can pay for with cash. Examples could include gifts, groceries, dining money, spending cash, haircuts, entertainment, etc. Payments for things such as rent or mortgage, utilities,

medical bills, credit card payments, etc., are excluded from this list. They're covered in the next section.

To add the amounts, just put them in the appropriate cells for the corresponding paycheck. Be sure to add a "-" (minus sign) before the amounts in this section to denote that you're subtracting

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A quick note about cash

In the beginning, it feels odd to use cash if you're used to spending with plastic. But, it's worth the effort.

A Google search of "using cash versus plastic" yields many results of people who are jumping on the cash bandwagon. The reasoning is simple: when you use cash, you're more aware of what you spend, so you end up spending less.

This ultimately puts more cash in your pocket to help you pay off debt and to get your spending under control. Think about it. Is there a reason businesses take plastic for payment? Is it just an easier way to pay, or, is it because they've found a way to get you to spend even more when you shop?

Spend with cash and you'll come out ahead. In no time, it'll become second nature.

this amount from your income, otherwise, the totals mentioned later will be wrong. Add additional rows, if needed.

Once you've figured out your categories, you'll need something to carry your cash. Any simple coupon holder you can purchase at retail stores will work. Each pay period, you'll withdraw cash from the bank that you will keep in the coupon holder, divided in separate sections by the same categories you set up in your spreadsheet.

You'll spend this money until it runs out, and when it's gone, it's gone. This method is typically called the "envelope method." You could even use several envelopes and write the category names on the outside. Don't lose any of the envelopes! That's why I keep my cash in something like the [E-Z Coupon Holder](#). It's portable yet durable to keep it all together when going to the store.

A few times at the grocery store, I've been asked about my little cash holder. I love being asked, because I get to explain why I do it this way (it saves me money – see "A quick note about cash")

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and keeps me accountable. I've also noticed others doing it as well. There might be hope for us yet.

The totals for all your cash withdrawals will be in the Total Cash Withdrawals row.

Add the Expenses for Non-Cash Transactions

Now determine what you need to use your checking account, money orders, or debit cards to make payments. Let's hash out those categories now. Again, using the figures from your tracked expenses, determine what you typically spend between pay periods and create categories. Like the withdrawals section, the spreadsheet will calculate how much money you need to spend using your bank (instead of cash), shown in the Total Non-Cash Transactions row.

NON-CASH TRANSACTIONS					
Cable/TV	-\$50.00				
Car Maintenance		-\$30.00			
Cell Phone		-\$80.00			
Credit Card 1			-\$50.00		
Credit Card 2		-\$300.00			
Childcare	-\$300.00				
Electricity	-\$80.00				
Fuel (home)			-\$30.00		
Fuel (gas)	-\$20.00		-\$50.00		
Giving			-\$20.00		
Insurance	-\$45.00				
Medical Bill		-\$30.00			
Misc.	-\$50.00		-\$25.00		
Rent/Mortgage	-\$300.00	-\$325.00			
Trash	-\$30.00				
Water		-\$20.00			
TOTAL NON-CASH TRANSACTIONS	-\$875.00	-\$785.00	-\$175.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Examples of this would include cable TV, internet, cell phone, credit card(s) and other debts, childcare, electricity, water, natural gas, trash service, medical bills, rent or mortgage and anything

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else along those lines.

You might also include gas in this section as well, since many stations are moving to a “pay-at-the-pump” system. The added benefit of paying at the pump is that you’re less likely to purchase extra items when you go into the convenience store; saving a little bit of money.

As in the Total Cash Withdrawals section, to add the amounts, just put them in the appropriate cells for the corresponding paycheck. Be sure to add a “-” (minus sign) before the amounts in this section to denote you’re subtracting this amount from your income, otherwise, the totals will be wrong.

Add any additional rows, if needed.

The totals for all your bank payments will be in the Non-Cash Transactions row.

Pay Period Remainder

The total (income minus expenses) for the week is calculated for you in the Pay Period Remainder box near the end of the page. What’s going on here isn’t too difficult. The Pay Period Remainder

Spreading the burden of bills between pay periods

Splitting the cost of a bill between pay periods can help free up money supplies when income is tight.

For example, I routinely split the cost of housing between my two pay periods each month. Half of the amount comes out of my first pay period, while the rest comes out of the second. In some cases, depending on when a bill is due, I split the cost between months as well.

Don’t let big bills get hold of your emotions! Spreading the burden between pay periods can help ease the anxiety of paying large bills.

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breaks down like this: your Total Income (a positive number) + your Total Cash Withdrawals (a negative number) + your Total Bank Payments (a negative number) = your Pay Period Remainder.

Obviously, the Pay Period Remainder has to be a positive number since it's hard to pay bills without sufficient income. But this is where having a budget comes in handy. Say you mortgage or rent is due on the first of every month but you don't make enough money to pay it all out of one paycheck.

With your budget visualized before you, it's easy to see how you could allocate half the amount from the first paycheck of the month, and the remainder out of another. You spread the payment across two pay periods.

Monthly Net Remainder

Finally, the amount in the Monthly Net Remainder box is the absolute grand total of what you have left over at the end of the month. Like the Pay Period Remainder, we're shooting to keep this number out of the red.



MONTHLY NET REMAINDER	\$0.00
--------------------------	--------

The goal is to have \$0.00 in this box, otherwise known as zero-based budgeting.⁴ You can get to zero by allocating leftover funds to your savings account, putting more toward debt, or adding more to a category if needed.

However, if you're like my wife, you like to have a "cushion" left over at the end of the month in case something unexpected happens like bank fees or something else you forgot. No matter what,

just balance your checkbook if you use checks. The budgeting spreadsheet can keep you in line, but can't keep you out of trouble if you spend more than you make.

Tracking Your Payments

You can keep track of what you withdraw by coloring the category cell a different color after you've used the money in it. I personally use a yellow color to highlight when I've spent money from a category. At the end of the month, I should have all the cells for each category shaded yellow.



(\$89.48)
(\$320.00)

Allocation Guidelines

How much should you be spending? The percentages vary depending on which financial guru you listen to, but for this example we'll use Dave Ramsey's recommendation as outlined in his best-selling book, "[The Total Money Makeover](#)."

Savings - 5 to 10%

Medical/Health - 5 to 10%

Housing - 25 to 35%

Personal money - 5 to 10%

Utilities - 5 to 10%

Recreation - 5 to 10%

Food - 5 to 15%

Debts - 5 to 10%

Transportation - 10 to 15%

Charitable giving - 10 to 15%

Clothing - 2 to 7%

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Getting Into a Routine

You Can Do It!

You've now got the tools to get on a budget. Integrating a budget into your personal finances can change your life. Now you can control the money you make instead of it controlling you.

Pretty awesome, isn't it?

Here are a few pointers to get you started:

Your spouse, roommate or significant other should be included in the process. If you live alone, then you can go at this alone or have a friend help. However, if you're not single or have roommates, then you should absolutely include your significant other or housemates in the process.

Have him or her give input on how much to put in each category. Talk about what is important to spend your money on each month. Work the process out together. No different than getting into shape, quitting a bad habit or improving any other area of your life, having the support and input of others will help you succeed.

Be flexible. No month is ever the same. One month might be filled with birthday parties for your child's friends, while the next month might be quiet as can be. While you'll likely duplicate last month's budget as a starting point for the new one, it almost certainly will change. Be flexible and learn to adjust as your needs arise. Be prepared to make changes. You could find that you are spending too much in some areas, and too little in others.

Get On A Budget!

Don't give up. You might have a rocky first couple of months. For me, it wasn't until the third month when things really started to click. Your results may be different. You might catch on quicker, or it might take more time. Just keep at it. You will soon master the art of budgeting and find it only takes about 15 minutes to plan your budget for the entire month.

I can't wait to hear from you. Please write me and tell me how you're doing. I want you to be successful. Using this method, I **KNOW** you can be.

Good luck, now go **Get On A Budget!**

Get On A Budget!

Additional Resources

Recommended Reading

There's a story I heard a lot from my dad growing up about the professionals who are tasked with hunting down those who make counterfeit currency. The story goes that experts study the details of the original bills so when a counterfeit comes along, they recognize it instantly.

Whether the story is true is anyone's guess. But, the moral of the story is without question: study the best, and you'll recognize the fakes.

I love to read. I probably consume, on average, one non-fiction book per month (a tip I got from the recommend *Millionaire Next Door*, see below). There is so much great information out there that not only helps with personal finance, but also your attitude toward work, play and everything in between.

Here are my top books:

[The Total Money Makeover](#) by Dave Ramsey – Ramsey's simple, no-nonsense approach to debt reduction is highly recommended and much needed in today's economic climate. If you've wandered around with debt for too long and want to be free from its grip, this book is a great guide.

[QBQ: The Question Behind the Question](#) by John G. Miller – This short little book is a must read if you're feeling lost at work. Miller challenges his readers to stop blaming others for where they are in life, and to take action to regain control. If you're a business owner, consider not only

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reading this, but encouraging your employees to do so as well.

[The Millionaire Next Door](#) by Thomas J. Stanley and William D. Danko – What would you say is someone told you that the average millionaire in America bought domestic cars, bought clothing at mid-range clothing stores and clipped coupons? Ever hear of Warren Buffett? One of the richest men in the world, Buffett still lives in the five-bedroom stucco house in Omaha, Nebraska that he purchased in 1957 for \$31,500. The Millionaire Next Door is an eye-opening case study of millionaires. Most of us have it dead wrong with our idea of what a millionaire looks like and acts like.

[Rich Dad, Poor Dad](#) by Robert J. Kiyosaki with Sharon L. Lechter – This book is half-parable, but all wisdom. Kiyosaki tells the story of a young child who learns about money from two dads – one a biological father, the other a family acquaintance – and their very different ways of looking at finances. Fathers take note: what you teach your children about money can have a lasting impression, good or bad.

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Contact

Questions?

It's possible that, after you've tracked your spending, formulated your budget, and gave it a try for a month or two, you might have more questions. Or you might have them even sooner than that.

Please feel free to send your questions to questions@getonabudget.com and I'll answer them in a timely manner.

Feedback?

Do you have comments or feedback about the book and/or the methods described here? Do you have a success story that you'd be willing to share with me? I would love to hear what you have to say.

Please send your correspondence to feedback@getonabudget.com.

On Twitter?

Follow me at twitter.com/getonabudget.

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