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UPDATE POST



5 Ways to Save this Autumn

Posted on September 12, 2014

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As the seasons change, so do our spending patterns. The start of school and the colder weather that come with autumn can bring added expenses to your budget. But by following the five tips below, your money doesn't have to fall from your wallet like leaves from a tree.

Take advantage of tax benefits on back to school spending

Back to school season can be very expensive, especially for families with more than one child. Thankfully, the internet is full of great advice on how to minimize the impact of this expensive time of year. One tip that's often overlooked, however, is to take advantage of potential tax deductions on school supply spending. While no federal deductions exist for such spending, you can often find them at the state level. A quick Google search or call to an accountant can find out for sure. If this tax break is in your state, be sure to save your receipts for all those expensive binders and gel pens. You'll be glad you did come tax time.

Look online for second-hand winter clothes

Colder weather generally means more expensive clothes. Boots, jackets, and

jeans are all significantly pricier than the lighter cotton shirts you wore during the summer. But because they are usually much more durable, they often make great items to purchase second-hand. Check out the well-made, brand name clothing options on second-hand websites like eBay. You can find great deals on high-quality clothes that have very little wear.

Turn off the lights and heat

In most of the country, your utility bills will increase as the seasons change and the days get shorter and colder. And with the Environmental Protection Agency's war on affordable energy, you will likely notice bigger bills than ever this year. In an effort to moderate them, get into the habit of turning off the lights and TV whenever you leave the room. To enjoy noticeable savings on your utility bill, turn down the heat an hour before bed and let your comforter do the work.

Find cheap indoor leisure activities

Many of the free outdoor activities that you enjoyed all summer are coming to an end along with the warm weather and long days. As your leisure activities move indoors, they generally become more

expensive. Instead of spending big money on movies and restaurants, enjoy free leisure time with the family with your favorite board games or books from the library. Or, take advantage of your cable package by getting into a good television show that the whole family enjoys. There are many great options this fall season.

Calibrate your health and benefits package during open enrollment

For most of us, the only time we can adjust our family's health and benefits plan is during open enrollment which usually begins October 1st. Use this time to calibrate your plan to best reflect your family's needs while not paying for services you won't use. For example, do any of your family members wear glasses? If so, see how much you paid for vision services this year and calculate whether you'd be better off with or without your company's vision benefits. Also, use this time to join – or change contributions – to your company's 401K savings plan. Be sure to take advantage of any company-matching contributions. Spending some time to make these decisions now will allow you to save money all year long.