

## Finding Extra Dollars for Retirement

“Spend less and save more.” That’s always sound financial advice, but it may seem easier said than done. Saving more is probably not as hard as you think, however—all it takes is a little creativity. A few dollars here or there may not seem like much, but if you make a deliberate effort to save, those extra funds can really add up. Here are some tips to help you find extra cash to put toward a more comfortable retirement.

### 1 Avoid impulse buys.

Buying something you don’t really need because it’s on sale isn’t saving money; it’s spending money you could otherwise stash away for retirement or use to reduce debt.

### 2 Negotiate a lower interest rate.

It never hurts to call your credit card company to negotiate a lower interest rate. If you keep yourself out of debt and pay your bills on time, you have the upper hand. At the start of the conversation, you may run into some resistance, but don’t give up! If you emphasize what a reliable customer you’ve been (and mention that you have no problem searching for a new credit card company), you should get what you want.

### 3 Cut up some credit cards.

You can even take it a step further and close out some of your credit card accounts. For instance, if you have cards that charge an annual fee, you could find extra money right now by getting rid of them. It’s an expense you can easily eliminate with a single phone call to the customer service number on the back of your card. Plenty of credit cards offer great benefits with no annual fee.

### 4 Go digital for your entertainment fix.

Cutting the cable cord may seem like a drastic measure, but thanks to the ever-increasing availability of content via streaming platforms (e.g., Netflix, Hulu, and YouTube), you’ll hardly notice a difference—but your wallet will! Or, if you’re a regular moviegoer, joining a streaming service instead could add up to big savings. For example, Netflix offers thousands of movies and TV shows, all easily accessible with a click of a mouse or remote control. You may end up watching a lot more movies, and you’ll avoid being tempted to buy that expensive theater popcorn and candy.

### 5 Check out the library.

Can you remember the last time you visited your local library? If it’s been a while, you may want to make a trip there soon. You can borrow much more than just books, DVDs, and CDs. Most libraries offer other cost-cutting perks, such as discounted museum passes, free Wi-Fi access, or musical instruments. Just think of all the creative ways you could save by borrowing instead of buying!

### 6 Bring the party home.

Instead of going out to socialize with friends and family, why not get together at your home to save some cash? Make a few hors d’oeuvres or a nice meal. Playing board games, as corny as it may sound, is always a good time, and it’s a whole lot cheaper than going out for entertainment. If your friends like the idea, convince them to take turns playing host. Saving big bucks while spending quality time with loved ones? Sounds like a perfect night!

## 7 Use your own bank's ATM.

Perhaps you've been there: you're rushing to your lunch meeting, realize you don't have any cash, and the most convenient ATM is not your bank's. The \$2 or \$3 charge for using another bank's ATM is steep, but it's not that big of a deal, right? Not so fast! Those fees may seem small at the time, but just a couple transactions per month can quickly snowball to hundreds of dollars. Avoid wasting money by planning where you'll get cash before you leave the house.

## It All Adds Up

No matter your situation, a better retirement is within reach if you just spend a little less and save a little more. The chart below shows how the tips offered here can add up to real savings!

Money-Saving Action	Potential Amount Saved per Month	Potential Balance If Invested for 25 Years with a 4% Annual Rate of Return
Avoid impulse buys	\$150	\$77,119
Negotiate a lower credit card interest rate*	\$25	\$12,853
Cut the cable cord	\$60	\$30,950
Borrow from the library	\$30	\$15,424
Bring the party home	\$50	\$25,706
Use your own bank's ATM	\$15	\$7,712

For illustrative purposes only. This illustration is hypothetical. Actual monthly savings amounts may vary depending on individual circumstances. This illustration is not intended to reflect the actual performance of any investment or investment strategy. Actual investments will move up and down over time. This illustration assumes a 4 percent annual rate of return compounded monthly, reinvestment of earnings, and no withdrawals. Rates of return may vary. The illustration does not reflect any charges, expenses, or fees that may be associated with your account(s). The tax-deferred accumulations shown above would be reduced if these fees had been deducted.

\*Only if appropriate in your specific situation. Please carefully consider all terms and conditions of a new arrangement and consult with your own tax and financial advisor.



John Gregorio  
 Teacher Retirement Solutions  
 100 Corporate Place, Suite 306 | Peabody, MA 01960 | 877.535.6470  
[johng@teacherretirementsolutions.com](mailto:johng@teacherretirementsolutions.com) | [www.teacherretirementsolutions.com](http://www.teacherretirementsolutions.com)

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Authored by the Retirement Consulting Services team at Commonwealth Financial Network.

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