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All About Work



How to Get a Little Bit Richer

These mini goals will help you grow your bottom line. By Jennifer Breheny Wallace

Is tax time bringing you down? Fixing that may not require a massive overhaul. Northwestern University researchers found that the confidence boost we get from achieving small money goals can build the momentum needed to conquer larger ones (like creating that emergency fund every expert recommends). Here, three totally doable goals to get you going. Tackle one at a time. By *next* April 15, you'll have improved your financial life.

1.

If your goal is to spend less...

"Negotiate at least one bill. Start by asking your cable company for a better rate. Then call your credit card companies and ask to have late fees waived or your interest rate lowered. Even medical bills are negotiable. Talk directly to the head of the billing department at the medical center. It may take a few calls for them to budge, but stick with it." —*Nicole Lapin, TV finance expert and author of* Rich Bitch, *a financial guide for young women*

2.

If your goal is to be more confident about money...

"Follow a personal-finance blog or podcast that focuses on your long-term money goals, like paying down debt or learning about investing. (One I like? Wisebread.com.) Make it a part of your morning routine or commute, and you'll get more comfortable with important terms and strategies." —*Shannon McNay, community builder at* readyforzero.com, *a personal-finance site that helps consumers pay off their debt*

3.

If your goal is to stick to a budget...

"Establish two separate bank accounts, or buckets, with separate debit cards. Use one for 'fun' money (clothes, entertainment); use the other for fixed expenses (food, utilities). After every paycheck, transfer a set amount—say, 10 percent—into your 'fun' account. When the fun money runs out, you'll know immediately!" —*Amanda Steinberg, founder of* dailyworth.com, *a finance and career website for women*