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*Live. Life. Well.*

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## Tips for Reducing Debt Stress

In 2020, Equifax<sup>1</sup> Canada reported that average consumer debt rose to \$74,897, and in the United States it was reported<sup>2</sup> to be \$92,727. Debt has been widely recognized by health experts as being associated with stress.

Accumulated debt related to student loans, medical bills, credit cards, mortgages, and many others have been linked to higher blood pressure, higher divorce rates, and poor self-reported health. While the degree of debt does not<sup>3</sup> appear to be directly correlated to the degree of stress experienced, one study<sup>4</sup> found that household debt was an independent predictor of health outcomes.

Here are some strategies to help you reduce debt stress:

### Know Your Numbers

Stress is often associated with the fear of the unknown. If you have been an ostrich with your head in the sand when it comes to your finances, there is no way to really know if your worries are justified. Getting a clear picture of your numbers will help you make informed decisions about how to move forward.

### Seek Professional Guidance

Seek guidance from a finance professional if you need help making sense of your numbers. They may also be able to offer suggestions to improve your financial wellbeing.

### Prioritize

Determine your financial priority areas, so you can address them first. Decide what needs to happen first, then second, and so on. Having clear priorities will help reduce stress and anxiety.



### Create a Plan

Create a plan to address your priority areas by outlining clear, practical steps. This may include creating a strategy to reduce debt incrementally, or shifting funds from other assets. Having a plan helps you focus your energy more efficiently and effectively.

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*To reduce debt stress, know your numbers, seek guidance from professionals when necessary, prioritize your needs, and create a plan to support your financial wellbeing.*

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- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/equifax-debt-1.5710996>
- <https://www.experian.com/blogs/ask-experian/research/consumer-debt-study/>
- <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01336>
- <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01336/full>



## 7 Ways to Save Money on Your Grocery Bill

According to the USDA<sup>5</sup>, the average adult spends between \$169.40 and \$392.70 dollars on food at home each month, with an average being \$263.08. (This does not include food costs associated with take-out or dining out.)

Here are 7 ways to save:

**Stock up and save.** Take advantage of weekly sales and buy-one-get-one deals. Warehouse clubs also offer significant discounts when you buy in bulk.

**Be loyal.** Sign up for a rewards program at your favorite local supermarket to maximize your reward points. Staying loyal to a single chain will help you accumulate points and take advantage of more offers.

**Simplify your menus.** Choose recipes with fewer ingredients. This will not only reduce your grocery bill, but it may also save time in the kitchen.

**Buy in season.** When it comes to produce, focus on the fruits and vegetables that are in season. For everything else, opt for frozen or canned.

**Use a cash back credit card.** Use your cash back credit card at the supermarket and put some grocery money back into your wallet.

**Maximize leftovers.** Find creative ways to use leftovers. This will reduce the number of meals you need to prepare at home each week and reduce your overall grocery bill as well.

**Buy the store brand.** Choose store brands when possible and save up to 25%<sup>6</sup>, according to some estimates. Many store brands are manufactured<sup>7</sup> by familiar national brands, so you may not even notice a difference.



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*With some careful planning, a food budget can be reigned in with just a few adjustments in shopping habits.*

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5. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/media/file/CostofFoodMay2021.pdf>

6. <https://www.consumerreports.org/>

7. [https://plma.com/about\\_industry/store\\_brand\\_facts](https://plma.com/about_industry/store_brand_facts)



## Money Matters: How Much Is Enough?

While we have all heard that money cannot buy happiness, most people believe that more is better when it comes to annual incomes. The research, however, says otherwise.

Subjective Wellbeing (SWB) is defined as “the extent to which a person believes or feels that his or her life is going well,” and this is one of the indicators used by researchers to measure happiness and life satisfaction.

The question of ‘How much is enough?’ has been the focus of many studies over the years, and the results have been surprising to many. A 2010 study found that there was no increase in emotional wellbeing beyond a \$75,000 annual income threshold for individuals.<sup>8</sup>

Another study, which examined data from over 1.7 million individuals around the globe, suggested that the income satiation level (the point at which an increase in income no longer produces an increase in happiness), is closer to \$95,000<sup>9</sup>.

One reason for the cutoff seems to be that with higher levels of income, there are often higher demands on time that leave fewer opportunities to enjoy positive life experiences. Evidently, not having enough time to enjoy the money you make can get in the way of happiness. Similarly, higher levels of stress that often accompany roles with higher salaries is thought to interfere with overall happiness and quality of life as well.

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*To answer the question of how much is enough, think beyond basic living expenses and also consider the things that are essential to the quality of life.*

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8. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1011492107>

9. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-017-0277-0>

## Creative Ways to Save

Saving money is such a simple concept: Don't spend as much and put the excess funds into a [savings account](#).

However, saving money can be challenging. After all, there are so many distractions vying for our attention and wallet. Streaming services promise enlightening entertainment. Favorite restaurants, retailers, concerts and other special events crowd our social media feeds. Advertisements for everything from vitamins to clothing promise us a better life, if only we buy this product. It is hard to resist.

If you're looking for money-saving strategies beyond "don't spend as much," consider the following ideas to keep more cash in your accounts.

- Barter
- Shop on Wednesdays
- Make a list
- Start a money-saving hobby
- Direct all windfalls into a savings account
- Try the \$5 trick
- Consider a classic coin-saving strategy
- Embrace the envelope system
- Find free events
- Quit an expensive habit
- Challenge yourself to reuse stuff
- Buy clothes from thrift stores
- Ask if an item will go on sale
- Try a no-spend holiday
- Audit your expenses
- Fix problems before they become major issues
- Turn your thermostat down
- Reassess your subscription
- Volunteer – strategically
- Create a free event

**Shop on Wednesdays:** What is so special about a Wednesday? Many [grocery stores](#) launch new sales mid-week, generally on Wednesdays, so shoppers who browse the aisles then often get first access to new promotions and discounts. Plus, stores sometimes honor the previous week's [coupons](#). Best of all, you can maximize your savings while shopping during a less busy time of the week.

**Direct All Windfalls Into a Savings Accounts:** Even if you are past the age of receiving birthday money from relatives, unexpected cash may still come your way. Miguel Suro, a Miami-based attorney who runs the personal finance site RichMiser.com with his wife, Lily Rodriguez, recommends opening a separate savings account just for unexpected cash. "Deposit all unexpected income there," "I mean things like product recall refunds, class action settlements, refunds you get when you return an item or money someone gifts you. Just money that you weren't expecting or counting on."

**Try the \$5 Trick:** Detroit blogger Aimee Spencer Tiemann says that a few years ago, her best friend shared a trick to save money: "Every time she received a \$5 bill, whether it be the change from a purchase or from her tips as a bartender, she put it away in a container in her house. She said, no matter what, if she got a \$5 bill, it went in the container. At the end of one year, she had \$4,000 in there."

**Audit Your Expenses:** Take a close look at everything you spend money on and ask yourself if there is any expense you can pare back. Maybe it's time to look at your insurance policies and see if you're overpaying for anything. Or maybe you divorced eight years ago and still have your ex-spouse on your life insurance. Or perhaps you have never calculated how much you are spending on takeout three times a week, and maybe it's time to start grocery shopping more often. Examine how you spend money. Taking action can result in significant savings.



## Protect Your Heart in the Heat



After coming out of another challenging year, many are looking forward to warmer weather, blue skies, and a chance to enjoy time with loved ones. Whether you plan on hosting small family cookouts, a short getaway with friends, or are planning to get active with a long walk, hike, or bike ride, it's important to remember to take care of yourself during all the warm weather fun. We all need to be a bit more cautious when it's hot out, but if you experience heart problems, it is wise to take some special steps. Certain medications can exaggerate your body's response to heat, but it's important to keep taking them. If you feel lightheaded, dizzy, or weak, move to a cooler place and cool down with a wet washcloth or fan. People over 50 may not realize they are thirsty. Keep a water bottle on hand and make a schedule to remind you to drink.

### Some Tips for Everyone:

- Wear ventilated shoes
- Dress in lightweight, light colored, and breathable clothing
- Stay hydrated and avoid caffeine or alcoholic beverages
- Take breaks in cool places



### If you are traveling this summer, a few simple precautions will allow for a much more comfortable and safer trip:

- Make sure you bring your medications and even a list of your medications.
- Inform your physician you are traveling. They might be able to recommend certain precautions, and they might know of reputable physicians or heart institutes in the area you are traveling to.



- Be mindful of your fluid and sodium intake, especially if you have heart failure or cardiomyopathy.
- If you have coronary artery disease, be mindful that high altitudes could trigger symptoms like shortness of breath.
- Be sure to get up when you can during a long flight to prevent blood clots, particularly if you have a history of vascular disease or heart failure.

### Once you arrive at your destination, here are a few ways to help maintain your health:

- **Move more:** Opt to walk as much as possible and incorporate activities that are more physically active. Additionally, many hotels often have a gym facility available for all guests. (Be sure to pack some workout clothes too.)
- **Eat Smart:** Pack healthy snacks as often as you can, and if possible be mindful of what you order as you explore the cuisine of the area in which you are traveling. However, do not deprive yourself, just remember moderation is key!

- **Wellness:** Make sure to mentally unwind too! See if your hotel offers spa services or massage services. Take a few minutes to meditate and strive to remain present as often as you can; it is your vacation, maximize your enjoyment of it!



Source: American Heart Association [heart.org/en/health-topics/consumer-healthcare/what-is-cardiovascular-disease/protect-your-heart-in-the-heat](https://heart.org/en/health-topics/consumer-healthcare/what-is-cardiovascular-disease/protect-your-heart-in-the-heat)

# Healthy Green Goddess Dressing



## RECIPE

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup non-dairy plain almond or coconut yogurt
- 1 bunch (about 1/2 cup) fresh parsley
- 1 bunch (about 1/2 cup) fresh dill
- 1/4 cup fresh mint
- 2 green onions
- 1 jalapeño, de-seeded
- 1/4-1/3 cup olive oil (or avocado oil)
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- Ground black pepper, adjust to taste

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a food processor, pulse together on low all the ingredients until creamy. Depending on the texture and amount of liquid the yogurt you're using has, you may have to add more olive oil to bring the dressing together.
2. Adjust seasonings to taste. The goal of the dressing is slightly thick and creamy, enough to coat the back of a spoon.

Prep Time

10 Minutes

Cook Time

NA

Servings

10



### Nutrition Facts

Calories	23k
Fat	1g
Cholesterol	2mg
Sodium	161mg
Carbohydrate	2g
Fiber	1g
Sugars	1g
Protein	3g

Source:

[The Best Healthy Green Goddess Dressing Recipe | Nutrition Stripped](#)



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