



Pay Yourself First



Do\$\$ars and Sense

Wouldn't it be nice to see your name on your pay stub with a dollar amount next to it each pay period? Before you get a penny of your hard earned money, mandatory deductions are taken out to pay Federal and State Taxes, and depending on who you work for additional deductions for retirement, and Medicare. The next line on your pay stub is for the endless voluntary deductions, for example; insurances, hospitalization, disability, the list could be endless. What is left is given to you in a section called "net pay". Now the really hard part, deciding what bill will get their share of your net pay. You do need to pay your bills on time. This saves the added expense of late fees, extra finance charges, disconnection fees for utili-

ties such as phone or electricity, and the most popular bill collectors. If at all possible, add your name to the list of bills to be paid, this will help you start a savings account for the unexpected things that could happen when you do not have a dime to spare. Consider needs versus wants. Think about the items you purchase on a regular basis. These add up. Where can you save? Do you eat out at restaurants a lot? Can you cut back on daily expenses, such as coffee, candy, soda, or cigarettes? Do you have services you do not really need, such as cable television or a cell phone? If you pay \$50 dollars a month for cable television, you are paying \$600 a year, \$1,200 for two years. If you have had cable televi-

sion for over 10 years, you have spent \$6,000 on the privilege of watching TV. Cell phones are a must, but did you know that cell phone plans change every couple of months, you may be missing out on a reduced amount for better service. Check it out. If you pay phone insurance, for example, \$4.99 a month, that is \$59.88 a year, if you make a claim, that is an additional \$50. If you make a claim in December, you have spent \$109.88 to get a new phone. I found the same phone on an internet site for \$15.00. I pay for four phones on my service, by dropping the insurance I saved \$239.52 a year in insurance charges and \$200 in possible replacement charges, I just paid myself \$439.52 .

Saving a \$1.00 a day or \$5.00 a day can add up to a nice Savings in 30 years.

| Saving \$1.00 a day | | Saving \$5.00 a day | |
|---------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|
| Year 1 | \$365 | Year 1 | \$1,825 |
| Year 5 | \$1,825 | Year 5 | \$9,125 |
| Year 10 | \$3,650 | Year 10 | \$18,250 |
| Year 30 | \$10,950 | Year 30 | \$54,750 |
| | | Pay Yourself First | |



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Special points of interest:

- *Pay Your self first*
- *Saving a \$1 or \$5 a day can add up*
- *How to invest in Bonds*
- *I-Savings Bonds Rates & Terms*
- *Play it Safe*
- *New Credit Card Laws*

Suggestions on How to Invest in Bonds

A bond is an IOU issued to you by a company, the federal government, a state, or a municipality. When you buy one, you are literally lending money to the issuer, and it is promising to pay you back. Bonds come in durations-how long it will take for you to be repaid-from one to 30 years. The longer the duration, the greater your risk since the bond has a longer exposure to interest-rate fluctuations. Still, bonds tend to be less risky investments than stock. Why? Because when you purchase stocks, you are taking ownership in a piece of the company-and if that company goes bankrupt, bondholders are typically paid back before stockholders. Log on to savingsbonds.gov to purchase government bonds directly from the U.S. Treasury. The U.S. Government backs treasury bonds, and the interest you



earn on them is generally not subject to state or local taxes. I-Bonds, which currently are earning more than 5 percent interest. You can cash in your electronic

I-Bonds anytime after 12 months at treasurydirect.gov. and your paper bonds at most banks. Another simple way to invest in bonds is through a bond fund, either as part of an IRA or with your employer's retirement plan. Bond funds are diversified, with a typical fund owning hundreds of different bonds. And while you generally can't buy an individual bond for less than \$1,000, you can buy into a bond fund for as little as \$25. you can easily invest in a bond fund through any of the major online brokerage firms, such as TD Ameritrade or E trade. To invest in bonds through your retirement plan at work, check with your Human Resource Representative to see what your options are.

Explanation of I—Savings Bonds Rates & Terms

I Bonds earn interest from the first day of their issue month. You can redeem them at any time after a twelve-month minimum holding period.

They are an accrual-type security

- Interest, if any, is added to the bond monthly and is paid when you redeem the bond
- I Bonds are sold at face value; i.e., you pay \$50 for a \$50 I Bond
- I Bonds grow in value with inflation-indexed earnings for up to 30

years

If you redeem I Bonds before they're five years old, you'll forfeit the three most recent months' interest; at or after 5-years old, you won't be penalized.

Rates

The I Bond earnings rate is a combination of two separate rates; a fixed rate and an inflation rate:

Fixed Rate:

- Announced each May and November

- Applies to all bonds issued during the six months period beginning with the announcement date.
- Remains the same for the life of the bond

The Secretary of the Treasury, or the Secretary's designee, determines the fixed rate of return. The fixed rate is established for the life of the bond. The fixed rate will always be greater than or equal to 0.00%. However, the fixed rate is not a guaranteed minimum rate; the composite rate could possibly be less than the fixed rate in deflationary situations. fixed rates of return, semiannual inflation rates, composite rates, and savings bonds redemption values is final and conclusive.

Play it Safe

*Never click on a link inside an e-mail to visit a Web site. Type the address into your browser instead.

*It's easy for a business to look legitimate online. If you have any doubts, verify the company with the Bette Business bureau.

*Only 2% of reported identity theft oc-

curs through the mail. Report online fraud to the Federal Trade Commission at ftc.gov/complaint.

*Retain your receipts, statements, and packing slips. Review them for accuracy.

*Shred confidential documents instead of simply discarding them in the trash.

The Federal Trade commission, the nation's consumer protection agency, works

to prevent fraud and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid it. To file a complaint or get free information on consumer issues, visit ftc.gov or call toll-free, 1-87-FTC-HELP.



What the new Credit Card Law means to YOU

The silver lining to the current credit crisis? Our leaders in Washington took a good look at the practices of credit card companies-and have taken steps to protect all of us by passing the Credit Card accountability, Responsibility, and Disclosure (CARD) Act. Most mandates will go into effect beginning in February 2010. Here are some changes that might affect you:



1. Steady interest rates. Interest rates cannot be increased within the first 12 months of signing up for a card, and promotional rates must last for a minimum of six months.
2. Advance notice of terms changes. Starting in September, credit card companies must give you 45 days' notice if interest rates, reward structures, or other significant terms change.
3. No more sudden, punitive rate increases. Presently, interest rates can jump if a payment is only a day late. Under the new law, a payment must be more than 60 days late for your interest rate to increase. And if you pay on time for six months, it drops back to your initial rate.
4. Clearer billing. When you carry a balance, credit card companies must tell you on your bill how long it will take to pay off your debt (and how much interest you'll pay over that period.) If you pay only the minimum each month.
5. Kids might have to carry cash. Credit card companies will no longer be allowed to market to cash-strapped students. If your kid is college-age, they'll need you to co-sign unless your child has the means to make payments on his or her own.



So What do you get when you buy an ounce?

In many English speaking countries there are two systems for measuring weight. For precious metals, called the troy ounce. And the other is for commodities such as sugar, grains, and the typical grocery items. It is called the avoirdupois ounce.

The troy ounce is heavier than the typical grocery store (avoirdupois) ounce used in the USA. When you purchase 1 ounce of silver or gold coin, you are receiving a "troy" ounce. If you put that same 1 troy

ounce coin on a grocery store scale you will find that it weighs about 105 more than the food (avoirdupois) ounce you are familiar with. It will weigh about 1.1 avoirdupois ounces. A troy ounce is equivalent to about 31.1 grams. Separately, the troy weight system has its own definition of a 'troy' pound. A 'troy pound' contains 12 troy ounces or 373.24 grams (which is over 13 avoirdupois ounces).

What is a Troy Ounce

It is thought that the troy ounce was named after a weight system used in Troyes France during the Middle Ages.

- 1 avoirdupois ounce = 437.5 grams, or 28.35 grams.
- 1 avoirdupois pound contains 16 avoirdupois ounces.
- This makes an avoirdupois pound equal to about 453.6 grams, or the equivalent of 14.583 "troy ounces".

Tint your ride, stay cool for 15 % less

Aside from improving the appearance and comfort of your vehicle, auto tinting can also:

- Help protect against harmful UV rays that can cause skin cancer and wrinkles
- Reduce glare from the sun, which can pose a risk to drivers trying to safely see the road and other drivers;

- Provide savings on fuel by lessening the burden on the air conditioning system
- Help reduce interior fading and deterioration.

It is not hard to Pay Yourself First when you save money on your car.

Call several tint dealers to find the best price for your \$\$\$\$\$\$\$.





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citizens of Louisiana***

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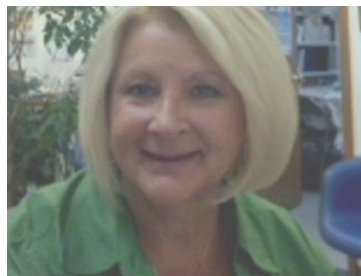
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Lost Traditions May Sadden Thanksgiving

If your Thanksgiving is steeped in family traditions, the occasion can be a difficult one should circumstances change and those traditions are lost. The tradition in my family is for each family member to choose a holiday. This Holiday will be at your home "forever" or though I thought. My sister Carol starts the year with a January get together to celebrate the New Year and January birthdays. My daughter Lacey chose Easter, my brother Dow chose Thanksgiving and I chose Christmas. No invitations are sent out, the day and the time is previously chosen before hand, each family member has their day to "shine" or so I thought, this year my brother is remodeling his house, there is no

guarantee that he will be finished by Thanksgiving day to host the luncheon, so I have agreed to trade Thanksgiving for Christmas. I am now the proud owner of Thanksgiving table ware, since I did not have anything to put on my dining room table to represent the holiday.

The changes don't even have to be as severe as death or divorce. Those losses can be made less painful



through the help of family and friends. Temporary changes can depress people, too. Changes may be relatively simple, such as grown chil-

dren missing their first Thanksgiving at their parents' house or spending your first holiday in a strange city and not being able to come home. A parent might be starting a new job and has to work on Thanksgiving Day. Grandparents might decide to spend the holidays at another sibling's house instead of hosting the dinner at their home. Whatever the reason, lack of tradition can be upsetting; telling yourself it's not that important misses the point.

If your circumstances will prevent the usual Thanksgiving this year, you should look on the situation as an opportunity to try something different. Adults without other family responsibilities may decide it's the perfect time to travel. On the other hand, if you have children or prefer to stay closer to home you can create some new traditions of your own.

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This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact 225-219-0351 or 1-888-LA HELPU (1-888-524-3578).

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