**Did someone say holidays?**

**Here’s how to reduce your spending.**

As we head into December, one thing is common, no matter what your financial situation is: we tend to spend more during the holiday season.

Luckily, Vitality is here to help you spend smart and make sure that you stay on track financially as we wrap up the year.

**Here are our 5 top tips:**

1. **Start the season with a budget**

The holiday season can be tricky when it comes to managing your money. On top of your normal financial duties and responsibilities, you may now need to plan for travelling, gifts and added costs linked to leisure and entertainment. Budgeting is always important, but it’s critical for you now. Allocate what needs to be spent – and what will be left over for the *nice-to-haves*.

1. **Book – or buy – ahead of the time**

December is ‘peak’ holiday season and with that comes increased costs for everything from flights, hotels and holiday packages to gifting options. One way to offset this is to plan ahead: do your festive shopping before holiday-mania hits the malls and take advantage of your Vitality travel benefits to get discounted travel deals. Avoiding the last-minute rush will help you save money – and stress less.

1. **Be careful with credit**

It’s easy to get caught up in the excitement of the holiday season but this can quickly lead to debt due to overspending. Even with all the sales and promotions in December, don’t be tempted into buying things you haven’t budgeted for, and don’t need. Also remember that if you buy something on credit, you will need to pay this money back with interest – so choose wisely.

1. **Re-think your gift ideas**

Don’t let presents affect your financial wellbeing for the new year. Getting gifts for loved ones is a common part of our festive celebrations but don’t get caught up in the commercial hype. If you’re creative, make your gifts or show your care through spending quality time together – like inviting a friend or family member to join you for a free 5km parkrun or cook a healthy homemade meal!

1. **Get ready for the new year**

As fun as the holidays are, the new year is never far away. Be careful with your spending to make sure that you have enough money left over for upcoming expenses. For some of us this means school fees; for others it can mean increases in rent or insurance premiums. Whatever your situation, make sure that you know what to expect and include these costs in your budget so that you have financial peace of mind.

*For more information about Vitality’s evidence-based approach that encourages and rewards members for healthier living, visit the* [*Vitality Global website*](https://www.vitalityglobal.com/)*.*