



6 Budget Friendly Ways to Beat the Winter Blues

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Now that the holidays are over and we head into the dark and gloomy days of winter, don't let the winter blues take their toll on



your budget. Making some smart spending decisions for the next few months can help you build up your savings account, and keep your budget in great shape for the year ahead.

Below are 6 budget-friendly ways to kick those winter blues to the curb:

1) Cook at home more often

Even though it's convenient to order takeout or pick up dinner on the way home from work on a chilly day, you will be paying a premium for that meal. Plan on cooking at home more frequently to save on the cost of food, and consider doubling a few recipes to freeze and store for future meals.

2) Check out free community events

If you're feeling a little stir crazy and want to get out and do something fun over the weekend, take a look at your community calendar for free events such as craft fairs, winter festivals and live music or dance performances in your area. This can be a great way to meet new people in your neighborhood and enjoy some cultural or community events at little or no cost.

3) Plan a staycation

Playing tourist in your own city or town can be a great way to discover some hidden gems and enjoy a mini escape from the usual routine. Not only will you save money on the cost of a flight and

accommodations for your getaway, but you can also take advantage of local deals and special offers from your favorite daily deals site.

4) Host a movie night

Maintaining a social life when the weather calls for many nights in can be challenging, but you can take the lead and host a movie night for friends and family members. Prepare some snacks for the group, or have everyone pitch in with a snack or dinner item to turn the event into a potluck.

5) Put together a reading list

If reading has been put on the back burner lately, use some of that downtime to catch up on your reading list. Put together a list of books you want to read in the next couple months. Whether you head to the library or buy a few books for the season, reading is a low-cost activity that will help you pass some time during the cold weather months - and may even teach you something new.

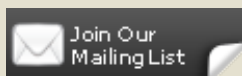
6) Recycle and repurpose

If you want to spruce up your place on a budget, think of ways to recycle and repurpose items you already have. From furnishings to home decor, think out of the box to work on a few creative projects this season. Search the Web or Pinterest for inspiration, themes and styles that will work for your living space.

Source: www.moneyusnews.com

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