

The save-more-money checklist: Winter 2023



December



12/31



Ghost your holiday shopping cart

You might get a deal if you don't check out immediately. When retailers see that you've abandoned something in your cart, they might email you a coupon to encourage you to complete your purchase. Savings sleigh. Here are [12 other ways to stay on budget with gifts](#).

Book medical appointments and spend FSA money

Consider getting health checkups before the end of the year. That way, if you've met your insurance plan's deductible, you could pay less for services before the January reset. If there's money left in your [FSA](#), spend it on eligible expenses, then submit those receipts before your employer's deadline (usually December 31) to get reimbursed. You might also double check if your employer offers a grace period to use your funds after the year ends or allows you to carry dollars over.

Plan for charitable giving

[These tips](#) could help you make a difference in 15 minutes or less. If you plan on donating money, you could potentially reduce this calendar year's tax bill if you [contribute to an eligible organization](#) before December 31. ([Do a quick search here](#) before donating.) Also, check if your workplace matches donations, which could make your gift go even further.

Contribute to tax-advantaged accounts

You could reduce your taxable income—and save for retirement—by putting money in an eligible retirement account before the end of the year. Most accounts, like 401(k)s and 403(b)s, have a year-end deadline. But other account types, such as IRAs and [HSAs](#), allow contributions up to the [annual limit](#) for the past year until the tax-filing deadline in April. However, for HSAs, waiting until April could mean making a contribution outside of payroll deductions, potentially incurring FICA taxes that could have otherwise been avoided if the contribution had been made through payroll deductions by December 31 of the previous year.

If you're also saving for education, keep those deadlines in mind too. Some states' 529 plan accounts have a year-end deadline to get state tax breaks.

Book your tax-prep appointment

Speaking of tax breaks, if you plan on getting a tax preparer's help with filing taxes for 2023, reserve your appointment this month before your preferred date is booked up. Wondering when to file taxes yourself and when to call in a pro? Here are [your options, explained](#).

Practice gratitude

Counting your blessings can be good for your money. That's because when you're feeling grateful, you're more willing to sacrifice immediate gains for better future outcomes, which can come in handy when you're saving or investing for a long-term goal.

Start by carving out 5 minutes and then reflect—through meditation, journaling, or [Fidelity's](#) gratitude exercise—on a few things in your life that you're thankful for.

Plan your PTO

If you plot out certain days you want to take off work in the year ahead, you might be more likely to use all your time off. Plus, if your manager allows you to put in requests early, you might get first dibs on popular days off (hello, Labor Day weekend).

Extend the life of pricey flowers

Flower prices have blossomed over the last year. Here's how to protect the sweet investment: Place them in a dark vase to stop sunlight from damaging stems. Add a few drops of bleach to keep bacteria at bay. And change the water and trim stems daily (so fresh and so clean, clean).