

Four To-Do's for Effective Bill Paying

The Federal Reserve recently estimated that nearly half of US households are unable to pay their credit card bills in full each month, and owe an average of more than \$15,000, spread across an average of four credit cards.* As 2016 holiday bills start to come in, mixed in with other monthly bill obligations, GreenPath is sharing four tips to help you get them paid on time.

1. **Make a list.** Create a master list of your bills, when they are due and the monthly amount. You will need to refer to this list, when you are actually paying the bills. If the bill is automatically deducted from your account, you will want to note that as well.
2. **Put it on the calendar.** Schedule a time for yourself to pay your bills. It will never be easier to pay your bills than on the day you get paid. If you are generally the type to pay bills on their due date, this is a break from your routine. If you are paid twice a month, you will pay bills twice a month. Likewise, if you are paid weekly, you will pay your bills weekly.
3. **Create a paycheck plan.** This is probably the most critical part and where people run into the most trouble. You may notice that more of your bills are due at one time of the month over another. You may need

to pay most bills on one check and very few on another. This is critical information. If your cell phone, car payment and rent payment are all due on the first, you may need to pay your car note and cell phone early, so that you only have to cover your rent on the next check.

Once you have this down, bills can go into "cruise control". For example, you may get into a routine where you always pay certain bills with your first check of the month and the other bills with your second check. There is no more guessing and it becomes routine.

4. **Ask for your due date to be changed, if needed.** If you do not have the ability to pay bills early, the other option is to call and ask for due dates to be changed. Also, understand which bills have a grace period (common with auto loans and mortgages). Many companies will change their due dates, including many credit card companies, student loan servicers, or utility companies.

*(SOURCE: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/moneybuilder/2016/12/30/this-week-in-credit-card-news-best-way-to-pay-off-credit-card-debt-concerns-about-mobile-wallets/#5cba800e546d>)



GreenPath Facebook Friends Page Nears 1,000 Friends

Last June, GreenPath launched a new closed Facebook group exclusively for our clients.

This month, we will welcome Friend number 1,000 to our group! We hope you will join us and take part in some great conversations!

Because this is a closed, private group, you will be able to interact with clients like yourself in a non-judgmental atmosphere. Find out what's working for others, share your

successes, offer support to clients just starting out, ask questions, and receive feedback and tips.

If you have a Facebook account, simply request access at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/GreenPathFriends>. We will confirm and then you can jump right in!

Do you have questions or ways we can make your GreenPath experience better? If so, please email us at suggestions@greenpath.com.

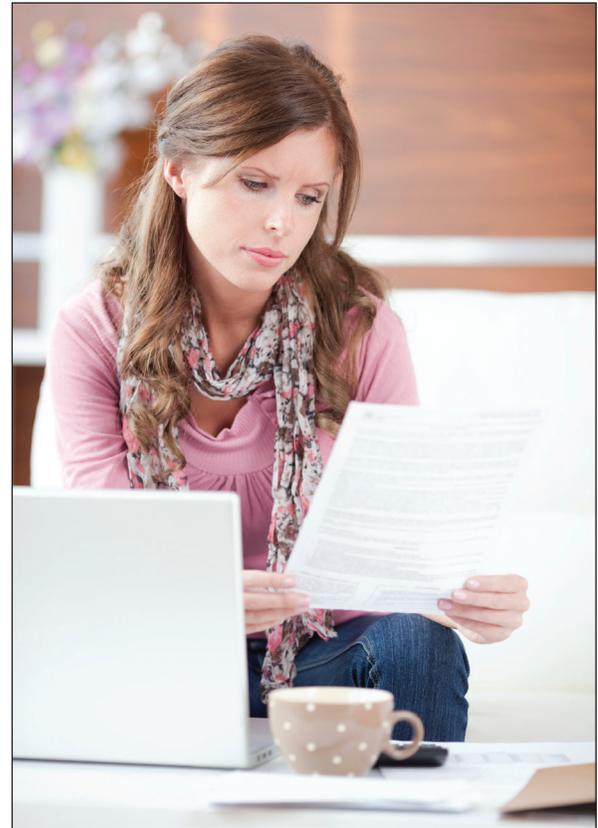
Four Tax Scams to Avoid

The 2017 tax season is underway and the Internal Revenue Service has issued four scams to avoid, when it comes to individuals claiming they are from the IRS.

Note that the IRS will never:

1. Call to demand immediate payment using a specific payment method, such as a prepaid debit card, gift card or wire transfer. Generally, the IRS will first mail you a bill, if you owe any taxes.
2. Threaten to immediately bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying.
3. Demand that you pay taxes without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe.
4. Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.

For more information, log on to www.irs.gov and search "tax scams".



February webinars focus in on Valentine's Day, Financial Wellness and Home buying (evening webinar)

GreenPath has two informative, free webinars on tap for February, with a third bonus evening webinar at the end of the month.

Why We Buy (Valentine's Edition)

Wednesday, February 8, noon ET

The National Retail Federation found that, in 2016, Valentine's Day spending hit \$19.7 billion, with an average of \$146.84 spent on a sweetheart! Wow! That's a lot of flowers and candy! But, how were those shoppers influenced to spend nearly \$150?

In the Psychology of Spending webinar, we will learn about the external factors that influence buying behavior, money personalities, ways to control spending, and strategies to overcome the forces that make us spend.

Steps to Financial Wellness

Wednesday, February 22, noon ET

Achieving financial success can sometimes seem like an overwhelming and stressful task. However, when developed

step by step, you can gain control of your finances. Setting goals, communicating with family members, creating a budget, building savings, monitoring and building credit, are some of the steps we will discuss during this interactive webinar.

BONUS! Evening Webinar: Preparing to Buy a Home **Tuesday, February 28, 7 pm ET**

Buying a home for the first time can be intimidating, but it does not have to be. We will help you determine how much you can afford, how to shop for and get approved for a loan and close on your new home. We will also explore budgeting tools and how to efficiently care for your home, once you've moved in.

Sign-up for any of these personal finance webinars, by logging on to www.greenpath.com/gfw-webinars.