

August 2019

7 Tips for Smart Back to School Shopping



Date/time to schedule: Thursday, August 1, 2019 @ 10:15 a.m.

Preheader Text: Enjoy big savings with a little planning.

Facebook Share Text: Tax-free weekend is THIS Friday & Saturday in Iowa, but that's just ONE way to save on back to school shopping. Here are several others...

Body Copy:

It's that time of year again! Time to gear up for back to school. That means prepping your kiddos for the new school year with all the necessary supplies and gear...and that can get expensive! However, with a little planning, back to school shopping doesn't have to break the bank.

A recent American Home Shield article highlights 7 useful tips for smart back to school shopping.

- 1. Take an inventory** — Sort through the supplies your child already has. You'll be amazed at the forgotten notebooks, pens, markers and rulers you can find in a drawer or last year's backpack.
- 2. Go through their closet** — Have your child try on last year's clothing. Make a list of what needs to be replaced. Ask other parents if they'd consider participating in a clothes swap. And look through your child's unwanted sports equipment to see if you can resell anything.
- 3. Price shop** — Compare prices online and in flyers before heading out to shop. See which stores have a price match policy and which are running the best sales. In some areas, local health departments offer free basic school supplies to parents who bring their child in for immunizations. Get more information.
- 4. Review the list** — Check with your child's school or refer to their class supply list before buying any high-priced technology items like computers and calculators to make sure those items are required.
- 5. Shop tax-free** — Review the chart below to see if and when your state offers a break from sales tax for a few days in August.

State	Dates
Arkansas	August 3-4
Connecticut	August 18-24

Florida	August 2-6
Iowa	August 2-3
Maryland	August 11-17
Massachusetts	August 17-18
Missouri	August 2-4
New Mexico	August 2-4
Ohio	August 2-4
Oklahoma	August 2-4
South Carolina	August 2-4
Texas	August 9-11
Virginia	August 2-4

6. Scan it — Use your smartphone apps to scan bar codes to see if you're getting the best deal.

7. Buy for durability — You may choose to buy sturdier plastic folders and binders instead of thinner ones so you can reuse them next year.

[Click here to read the full article.](#)

How to Prepare Financially for a Big Breakup or Divorce



Date/time to schedule: Tuesday, August 13, 2019 @ 7:00 p.m.

Preheader Text: We're here for all of it.

Facebook Share Text: While it's not "fun" to talk about divorces & break-ups, they're real, and there are some important steps you need to take if you go through it.

Body Copy:

We get that it's not always "fun" to talk about divorces and break-ups, but it's real life...and we're here to walk with you through EVERY stage of life - both the triumphs AND the struggles.

In a recent *mint.com* article, contributing writer Emma Johnson highlights 5 important financial steps to take when preparing for a big breakup or divorce.

1. Get informed about your own financial picture

Each breakup is unique, and your new financial picture as it relates to your soon-to-be ex depends on lots of factors, including who earns more, whether there are children, if you are married or not, and whose name is on assets like a home and retirement investments — as well as any debt.

Pull all the financial information you can about both yourself and your partner or spouse. Specifically, compile these documents:

- Tax returns for all parties for the past 3 years
- Employment records
- Mortgage statements
- Property tax statements
- Car loans
- Credit card and other debts
- Financial institution statements, including checking, savings, CDs
- Retirement accounts, including accounts from before you were married
- Brokerage accounts
- Life insurance statements
- Proof of children's expenses, including health insurance and health care expenses, day care / camp, after care, extracurricular activities
- Children's savings and college investment accounts
- Social security records

- Trust and estate records

2. Open your own accounts

While any joint and brokerage accounts may be frozen until you come to a legal agreement, it is not uncommon for one party to clean out any checking and savings accounts, leaving the other without funds for a new apartment, attorneys' fees, or food.

To ensure your own security, and minimize squabbles, open accounts in your own name. Start depositing your paychecks and other income into the new account. Avoid taking money out of a joint account, as doing so can complicate any negotiations.

3. Pull your credit score and credit history

A strong credit score is one of the most powerful tools in creating a positive, post-breakup financial future. Your credit report may reveal open accounts that you were not aware of — like accounts fraudulently opened by a stranger, or secret financial activity your partner kept from you. Delinquencies, errors and other items that ding your credit score will also be revealed.

4. Decouple joint credit accounts

It is critical to get your name off any joint debt, starting with credit cards. If both your names are on an account, and your partner does not pay the monthly statement, or racks up additional debt, that will affect your credit score and history, and you are likely legally responsible for that debt.

To protect yourself:

- Close any joint accounts
- Remove your name as authorized user on the other person's account — and remove them from any of your accounts
- Open an account in your own name only
- Set up automatic payments from your own personal checking accounts to make sure they are paid on time, and ideally in full
- Pay close attention to other debt, like a mortgage, car and personal loans, to ensure they are also paid on time
- Keep an eye on your credit score and report, and take quick action if suspicious activity pops up

5. Focus on increasing your income and savings

No matter what your divorce settlement looks like, or how much you and your partner earn today, your post-breakup life will likely to be financially tight — at least in the short-term. Focus on growing your career and income. Double-down on frugal living, create a budget, and put your energy and time into building your career, starting that side gig you've been dreaming about, or boosting your business's profits. Build up emergency and long-term savings, and invest for a healthy retirement.

Keep in mind that YOUR credit union is here to walk alongside you during every life event. Whenever you have questions or need financial advice, stop in, call or email us. After all, our primary job is to serve YOU, our member-owners!

[Click here to read the full article.](#)

5 Money Saving Benefits of Organizing Your Home (on a Budget)



Date/time to schedule: Friday, August 23, 2019 @ 10:45 a.m.

Preheader Text: Give it a go this weekend!

Facebook Share Text: One of the best ways to make the most of what you already have is to get organized. In fact, organizing your home and belongings will save you money in the long run. See how...

Body Copy:

If you're trying to save money or get out of debt, one of the best ways to make the most of what you already have is to get organized. In fact, organizing your home and belongings will save you money in the long run.

A 2017 "Lost and Found Survey" found that Americans spend \$2.7 billion annually replacing lost items. In addition, losing important financial papers like bills can lead to late fees and damage your credit score, resulting in higher interest rates on loans. And these are just a few of the ways disorganization can drain your wallet.

In a recent *moneycrashers.com* article, contributing writer Sarah Graves shares 5 money saving benefits of organizing your home.

1. You'll know what you have

How many of us have run to the store to buy something we need, only to later tidy up and discover that very thing hidden away in the bottom of a drawer? Having a system for keeping everything in its designated place, where you know exactly where to find a roll of tape or an envelope for mailing a letter, means you won't have to waste money on duplicate items you didn't realize you already had.

2. You'll know what you need

Sometimes when you discover things you didn't know you had, you've already bought a duplicate because it was something you needed and couldn't find. But other times, you might come across things you never missed at all.

The process of decluttering can be eye-opening when it comes to knowing what you can live without. When people report feeling happier after organizing their homes, for many, it's because of a sense of lightness that comes from letting go of excess stuff.

3. You can make money

When you go through all your stuff, you'll likely discover things you can sell for a profit. Just about anything, as long as it's in good condition, can be resold, from clothing to children's toys to furniture and electronics. Here are some suggestions for what to do with your excess stuff.

- **Clothing:** You can resell brand-name clothing through an online consignment shop, or local consignment shops and pop-ups are other options for reselling clothes that are still in good condition.
- **Children's toys:** Kid's toys are always in popular demand, and Facebook groups can be a great place for reselling these. Do a search to find out if there are any resale Facebook groups near you.
- **Furniture:** Keep furniture sales local, as the shipping costs on a big item won't make it feasible for online resale.
- **Electronics:** You can resell everything from computers to cell phones to gaming systems and controllers.

4. You'll waste less

One prominent source of waste, especially in America, is food waste. According to a 2018 study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Americans waste, on average, 30% of their food supply. This equates to a pound of food per person per day, an unquestionable waste of financial resources.

When you organize your kitchen, including the refrigerator and pantry, it can help prevent some of this waste. You'll know what you have since it's visible and accessible, so you'll be much less likely to allow food to spoil.

Another form of organization is meal planning, which is carefully devised to take advantage of all available food in the home before it spoils.

5. It will help you cut expenses

According to the 2017 Ikea "Life at Home" survey, 1 in 10 U.S. households rents a storage unit. While there may be some legitimate reasons for doing so, such as needing to temporarily house your stuff while you're in transition, spending extra money just to store stuff you're not using may be an indication that it's time to declutter.

If your household is one of the 1 in 10, consider going through your storage unit and asking yourself some harsh questions about whether you really need these things and, if not, whether you can score some extra cash by reselling them. Doing so will eliminate the cost of the storage unit as well as potentially earn you some money for stuff you weren't using anyway.

Organizing can also cut expenses in other ways. Organizing your financial paperwork, such as bills, can reduce late fees and the higher interest rates that come from having bad credit.

[Click here to read the full article.](#)