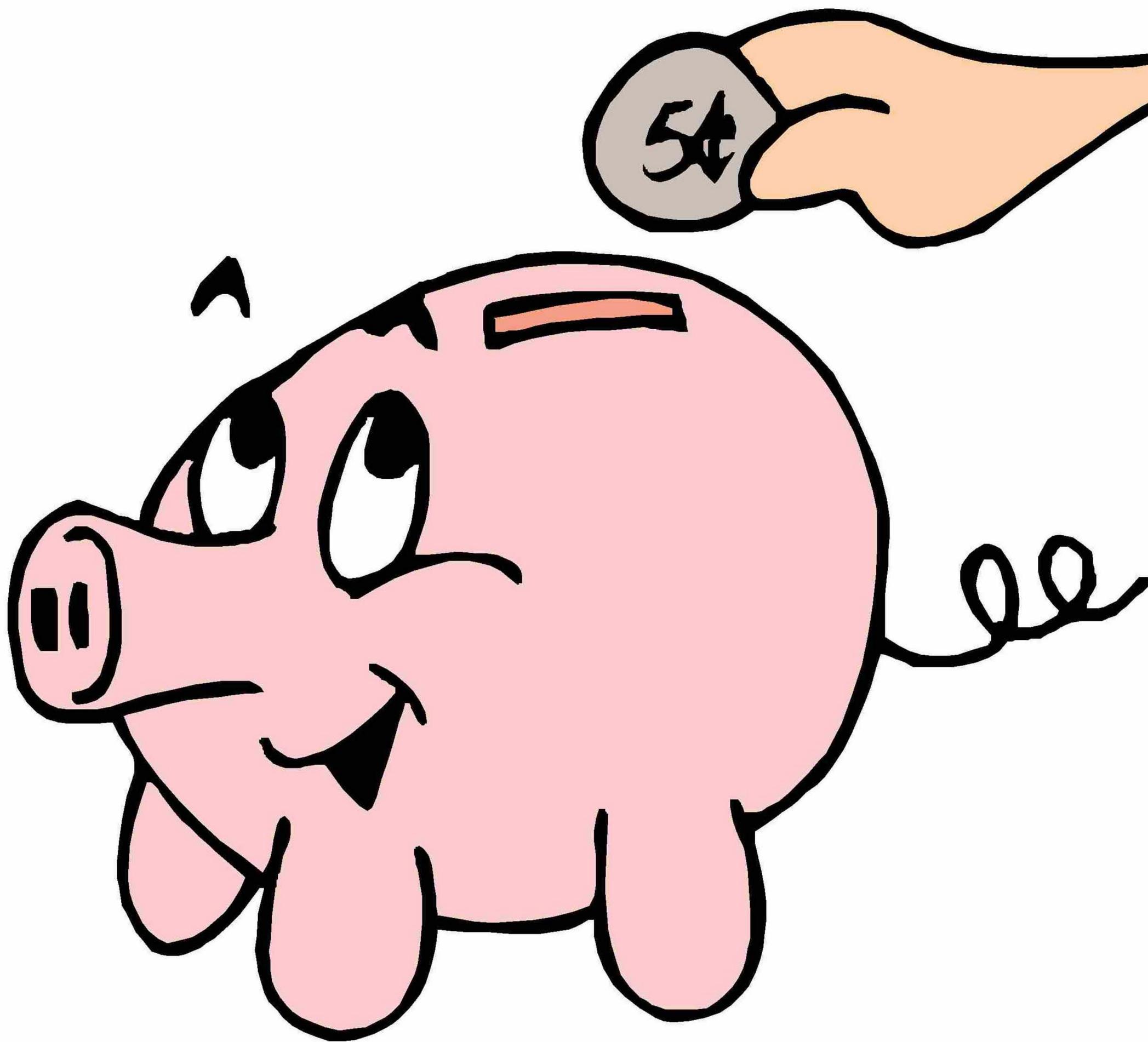


# 10 Ways To Embrace The Frugal Life



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To truly enjoy everything they want out of life, many people have been turning to frugal living. By embracing the frugal life, they have been able to get rid of debt, save more for retirement, live a richer life, and most importantly finally exercise control over their finances and lifestyle.

You don't have to pick up and move half way 'round the world as my wife and I did to embrace the frugal life. There are plenty of ways for you to add a dose of frugal living right in your home town. If you are ready to add some frugal living to your lifestyle here are 10 ways that you can get started.

**Rediscover Your Local Library** – No doubt you remember the library from your childhood. Well, the library has become even better these days. In addition to books and magazines, many libraries now carry movies as well. With the cost of all these entertainments rising so fast, there's nothing like getting your entertainment for free. And did you know that you can even borrow books for your Kindle from the websites of libraries that participate in the Amazon Overdrive program? There's really little reason to buy books ever again. As far as movies are concerned, if you simply have to have a certain title tonight, give Redbox a try. Their super low \$1 per night rentals certainly beat the high cost of purchasing DVDs and bluerays.

**Make Use of Coupons** – The average consumer saves 12% per year on groceries by using coupons. You don't have to be average though. Taking as little as an hour per week can save you 25% off your grocery bills easily. You can save even more by finding a grocery store that doubles coupons and by searching for sales and discounts before buying pretty much any product or service. And don't forget online sources for coupons.

**Cook More, Eat Out Less** – While I agree that eating out is fun, it is also way more expensive than making it yourself at home. If you eat out every week, challenge yourself to cut back on the restaurant excursions. By simply dropping a few trips per month to the restaurant you can save literally hundreds of dollars, especially if you have a family. One other good idea for families is to look for restaurants that offer free meals or discounts to children. Or you can join me in Bangkok where our average cost of eating out is about \$10 for the three of us.

**Pay Your Bills Online** – This may not make a huge difference, but you can save yourself the cost of several stamps each month and avoid the possibility of late fees by setting up all your eligible accounts for online bill pay. Just be careful to monitor your account balance if you set up automatic bill payments.

**Minimize Your Auto Expenses** – Whenever possible, save money on gas by walking. Not only will your checking account feel better, you will as well and so will the planet. If you have to take the car, try to plan your errands in a logical fashion so you aren't driving to similar places several times a week.

**Use Homemade Cleaning Products** – You might be surprised at how many things you can clean using simple cleaning agents like bleach, vinegar, and baking soda. Commercial detergents are often harsh, bad for the environment, and downright expensive. Why pay for dyes, perfumes, and marketing costs when you can get the same results for a fraction of the cost?

**Look for Freebies** – At the extreme, you can head to Costco or Ikea for a free lunch or dinner, but there are loads of other freebies out there if you know where to look. This can be a particularly good way to save money if you don't mind trying new products.

**Use Cold Water** – According to Trent Hamm of The Simple Dollar, "running mostly cold washes with all cold rinses saves us \$214 per year." That's a pretty compelling argument for washing in cold water. He also mentions that unless your laundry is stained or heavily soiled, there is really no need for hot water. And, hot water damages clothes more, causing shrinking, fading and wrinkling. So, you are likely to keep your clothes in good shape longer by using cold water, which means you will save money on your clothing budget as well.

**Turn Off the Electricity** – I don't mean for you to go back to using oil lamps and candles, that is too extreme. You can however make a habit of turning off lights and electronics when they aren't in use. This simple frugal habit can add up to several hundred dollars in yearly savings.

**Do It Yourself** – There are many maintenance type tasks that you can easily learn to do for yourself rather than paying others. One example that quickly comes to mind is oil changes. I know the quick lube places seem inexpensive, but they are not nearly as inexpensive as changing your own

oil and filter. And if you have two or more cars you multiply your savings. Here are 10 more ways to save money on car maintenance.

So there you have it, 10 quick easy ways to begin a new frugal life. None of these ideas will make you rich, but taken together they can save you thousands of dollars a year.