



# FALLING BACK INTO ROUTINE

When the kids go back to school and the fun of summer comes to a close, it's a great time to reevaluate your finances for the upcoming year. Here are some simple reminders to help keep you on track\*.

**Paying bills:** Aim to pay bills on time every time. Did you know you take a hit on your credit score with every late payment?

**TIP:** **YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD OF AUTOPAY.** It can be a great tool for ensuring you never miss a payment, ever. It's convenient and often easy to set up; you just need to maintain a balance to cover each bill.<sup>1</sup>

**Managing debt:** What kind of debt do you carry? Credit card debt, loans, maybe a mortgage? Not all debt is created equal; some debt is considered "good" and other types less so. The important thing is keeping track of what you have and not letting things get out of control.

**TIP:** **WHEN YOU'RE READY TO PAY DOWN DEBT,** credit cards can be a good place to start because they often have higher interest rates. If you maintain balances on multiple cards, try paying extra on one card at a time to pay it off more quickly.<sup>2</sup>

**Planning for emergencies:** Medical emergencies, as well as unexpected car and house repairs are big expenses we hope will never happen. But when they do, you'll be glad to have savings set aside.

**TIP:** **THE PANDEMIC CHANGED WHAT'S POSSIBLE** for some families to save. Set a financial goal that's attainable based on your income. Making 25 percent less than pre-pandemic? Then save 25 percent less. Or try saving up one month's income (the ultimate goal is three to six months' worth).<sup>3</sup>

**Saving for the future:** In order to save for your future, you need to identify what's most important to you. Is it saving for kids' college, retirement living or your own professional development?

**TIP:** **REMEMBER, IT'S NEVER TOO LATE** to start saving for retirement. Experts suggest saving 10 to 15 percent of pre-tax income annually; don't be discouraged if you hover at the lower end of this to start.

\*Note: These tips and tricks are not a substitute for professional financial advice.

<sup>1</sup>Taylor Medine, *Should I Set Up Autopay?* Retrieved July 19, 2022 from <https://www.experian.com/blogs/ask-experian/should-i-set-up-autopay/>

<sup>2</sup>Shannon Doyle, *Financial Capabilities Everyone Needs to Develop: Part 2*, Retrieved July 18, 2022 from <https://www.lssmn.org/financialcounseling/blog/financial-capabilities-everyone-needs-develop-part-2>

<sup>3</sup>Elizabeth Gravier, *Three to Six Months of Savings Might be Tried and True*, Retrieved June 16, 2022 from <https://www.cnbc.com/select/how-much-to-save-in-emergency-fund/>