

# MONEY MATTERS



## Recessionproof Your Finances

by John Addison

(NAPSA)—Whether you call it a recession, a slowdown or simply a rough patch, turbulent financial times can be weathered. Try these tips:

### Get Out Of Debt ASAP

Try to pay down credit cards and high interest debt as soon as possible. And if you've been playing the balance transfer game, look out: Those zero- or low-interest balance transfer offers are likely to become a thing of the past as more card issuers tighten their belts.



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### Leave Retirement Alone

Raiding your 401(k) or IRA is one of the worst financial moves you can make. You'll get hit with stiff penalty fees, not to mention your loss in future earnings.

### Stash Cash

Try to build a cash cushion of three to six months, in case of emergencies. That can keep you from having to charge unexpected expenses.

### Don't Rely On Credit

Charging essentials like groceries or gas is a serious financial red flag indicating your lifestyle is out of balance with your income. Take steps to downgrade your lifestyle (downgrade your car or house) or increase your income (get a roommate, start your own business) and get your finances in balance.

### Watch Your Statements

Many lenders are raising rates, hiking fees and lowering credit limits. If your rate gets hiked, call the issuer and ask why and whether it can be reversed. You might also consider consolidating your debt to get a better handle on payments.

### Guard Credit

Try to avoid using more than 10 percent of your credit limit when making purchases—a credit utilization of more than 50 percent is likely to hurt your credit score. Late bill payments can hurt your score, too. If you can't make a payment, contact your lender to make an arrangement or set up a payment plan.

### Keep Saving

Don't let emotions keep you from contributing to your retirement accounts. You can put \$5,000 into an IRA in 2008, or \$6,000 if you're 50 or older.

### Back To Basics

Update your life insurance and be certain you have a will in place to protect those you care about.

### Learn More

Financial professionals at Primerica have created a guide that can show how to take control of your financial life. To get a copy of "How Money Works," write to Primerica, 3120 Breckinridge Blvd., Duluth, GA 30099, ATTN: Corporate Relations, or call (770) 564-6329. For more information, visit [www.primerica.com](http://www.primerica.com).

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