

# Budgeting to save

*“Once you grow conscious of what you’re spending, you tend not to spend as much.”*

**B**eing a poyo is by far the least fun characteristic of being a student so *Utimes* reporter **LARISA TAIT** asked Monash student advisor, Sam Taylor for professional advice to bail out of financial woe.

The first step for anyone preparing a budget is to create a spending diary, Taylor says.

A budget is not very useful without one because people often aren’t accurate in estimating how much they’re spending and what they’re spending money on.

“I’d recommend doing a spending diary for at least a month, which will give you a picture of how much you are actually spending. Based on that you can draw up a budget.”

Basically, for a period, you must note down every single thing that you spend; every dollar that comes out of your pocket you keep track of. This will catch out things like when you’re on your way to uni and you grab a coffee. You don’t really think about that when you’re budgeting because it’s what you do every morning. But that’s roughly \$15 every week that could be spent on necessities.

Once you’ve got your weekly expenditure, you can assess where you’re at. It also helps with important adjustments, for



example, “I need to take that out; I need to put that in”.

Your spending diary shows your weekly expenses and financial priorities. Anything left over can be used for things you may simply want.

However, what you won’t have is the longer-term expenses like car registration and semester books. The only way to allow for those things is to plan ahead and know what you’re financial commitments are going to be in the year.

The problem comes when your expenditure is larger than your income and you need to decide what things you should cut.

“Because everyone has different circumstances, it really varies what you can save on,” Taylor says.

The things you discover from these spending diaries are the little expenses and those are the ones to cut out if possible.

“What I think people find is once you start budgeting, you do start to cut things out automatically.

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The most important things when it comes to preparing a budget are you have to be accurate and you have to stick to it. And if either of those two is wrong, a budget simply won’t work.

“It’s also important to shop around when you’re dealing with large expenses, for example, a laptop,” Taylor says.

Another good tip is that if you have built up a lot of debt and are struggling, make sure you engage with your creditors. Speak to them about it and seek assistance early on.

It’s really important to engage with the problem if there are difficulties arising. The longer you leave it, undoubtedly the worse the consequences will be.

“If you’re having trouble sticking to a budget, come and see people like us. We are here to help.”

## How to save money?



*“Go out less”*  
Heidi – health science/social work



*“Use public transport”*  
Jacqui – arts/business



*“Cut back on buying clothes”*  
Josh – paramedics



*“Live close to study”*  
Min – masters



*“Bring food from home”*  
Sean – performing arts