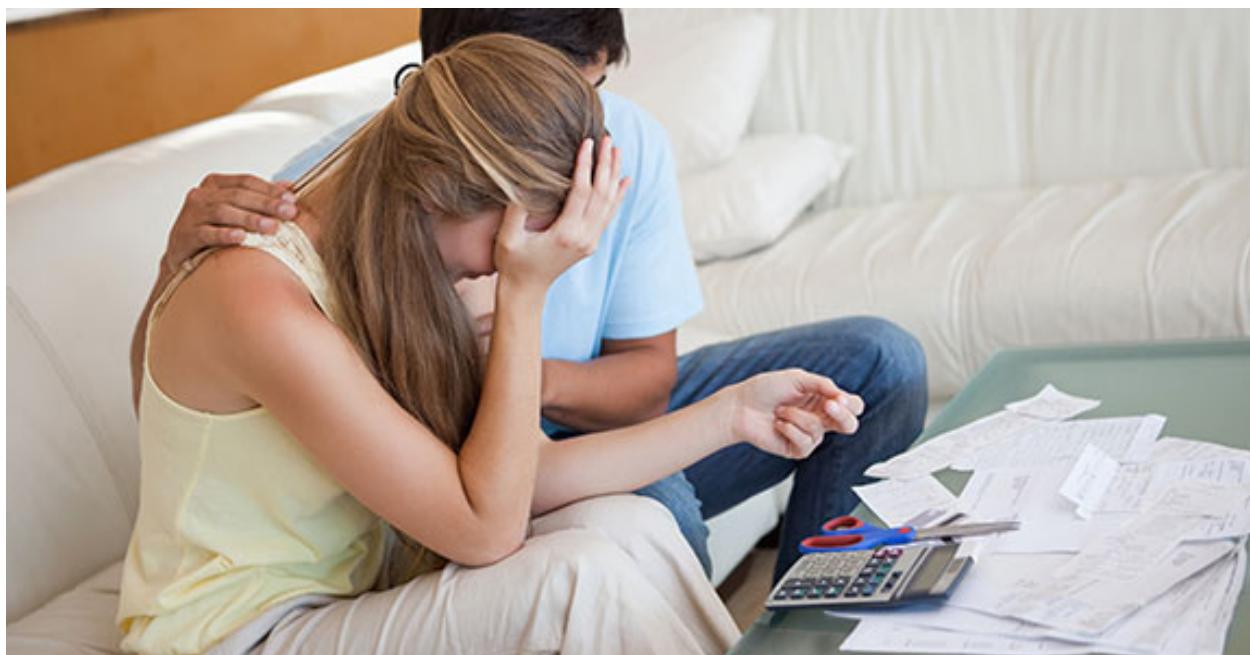


## Cure a vacation-spending hangover

Labor Day traditionally marks the end of summer. As you begin to resettle into your normal work routine, are you suffering from a vacation-spending hangover?



Pent-up demand for a break from the daily grind leads many to overindulge on vacation, with the result that they return with expanded waistlines but skinny wallets.

While overspending on vacation may seem like you're paying for a well-deserved reward at the time, it can lead to financial headaches that last a lot longer than the thrill of a week at Disney World.

### **Learn from your mistakes**

Unless you've got a real problem with debt, the painful reminders of financial overindulgence are usually enough to get you back on track with your budget and long-term goals.

It's this self-knowledge that is so important to ensuring you don't give in and repeat your mistakes next year, says Donna Skeels Cygan, author of "The Joy of Financial Security" and president of Sage Future Financial.

Skeels Cygan adds that research shows that the biggest contributor to happiness is financial security, so remind yourself that by avoiding short-term fixes in the form of expensive vacations, you're boosting your prospects for happiness in the long term. Waiting until you are financially secure means you'll be able to indulge without guilt.

### **Vacation in your own backyard**

Many families don't abandon the concept of vacation; instead they keep an eye on the budget by skipping an elaborate trip in favor of staying close to home.

A survey conducted in July by American Consumer Credit Counseling found that 35 percent of budget-conscious consumers planned to reduce their spending on summer activities and another survey by travel company Skift found that 63 percent said they were skipping vacation altogether.

"For many families, summertime means an uptick in spending," Steven Trumble, president and CEO of American Consumer Credit Counseling, said in a release about the survey. "But for those still feeling the effects of a slowly recovering economy ... the season now means more time at home."

But while being close to home may not be the same as being on a Caribbean beach, it's not so terrible. Day-to-day life probably leaves little time to explore what your own area has to offer in the way of recreation. "Look at what's nearby and what's cheaper," says Skeels Cygan. "It's the family time that's important."

If you've been left with a vacation-spending hangover, check out what the experts say on the reasons behind it and how to prevent it in the future.

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