

# 6 Superb Ways to Curb Costs

Many bills are the result of long-term habits. After years of raising children and working full time, it's easy for old patterns to continue unchallenged. That's why a comprehensive bill review is the first step for revealing expenses that are no longer necessary—as well as discovering more attractive and affordable options, including:

## 1. TWO CARS?

**When both spouses were working full time and getting children to different events, two cars may have been a requirement.** Once scheduling demands change, however, the need for two (or more) vehicles probably no longer exists.

**Compare the costs** – Encourage your clients to examine what they paid over the past year for maintenance and repairs—particularly if they own older cars—to determine if it would be more cost effective to sell one (or more) cars, or perhaps even to buy a new (or newer) car. Why not own a nicer car if it ends up costing less?

**Consider other options** – Traditionally, public transit was not considered very glamorous, but the eco-friendly and green movements have changed many people's views, while technology now offers attractive alternatives for those who don't want to rely on taxicab prices. Some large cities have senior-specific transportation options, and services like Lyft and Uber are becoming more popular, even in less populated areas.

## 2. CUT THE CABLE

**With the improvement of online streaming options, many people have decided they prefer selecting what they want to view (often avoiding commercials) over enduring whatever is available on cable** (plus the wasted time flipping channels, trying to find something worth watching).

Several low-cost paid streaming services offer extensive on-demand programming options, while many familiar television channels (including the major networks, popular cable stations and news channels) stream their content free of charge. (See sidebar below.)

While it's increasingly popular to view this content on a desktop, laptop or mobile device, it's just as easy to attach a small, inexpensive device (like Roku, Chromecast, Amazon Fire, Apple TV and Nexus Player) to stream online content, via Wi-Fi, directly to your television.

In addition to giving you TV access to streaming services (like Netflix and Hulu) these devices also

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## LOOKING BEYOND CABLE AND SATELLITE SERVICES

### 10 Low-Cost Paid Streaming Services

1. Netflix
2. Hulu
3. Amazon Video
4. Sling TV
5. Showtime
6. HBO Now
7. Apple TV
8. Warner Archive
9. CBS All Access
10. And many others, including sports-specific channels

### 10 FREE Online TV Channels

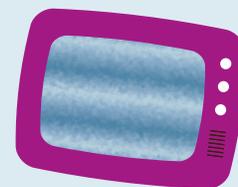
1. FOX
2. Me TV
3. Home & Garden TV
4. Discovery Channel
5. MTV
6. Comedy Central
7. Bravo
8. Lifetime
9. Food Network
10. PBS (and PBS Kids)

### 7 Live Online News Channels

1. CNN
2. MSNBC
3. WSJ
4. Bloomberg Television
5. TMZ
6. CBS News
7. ABC News

### 6 WEB Only Channels

1. TED Talks
2. Documentary Addict
3. World Science U
4. Snag Films
5. Twit TV
6. YouTube



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make it simple to enjoy web-only content, like YouTube. Some of the best YouTube channels include: The Paramount Vault, Timeless Classic Movies and other collections of movies from the silver screen era as well as more modern films.

Add another small investment in an over-the-air antenna and you'll be able to tune in local hi-definition channels for no monthly fee. Cable and satellite services, and their often-exorbitant monthly fees are becoming a thing of the past for many households, and seniors are no exception.

## 3. OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND?

**For years, many people have dutifully paid monthly storage unit fees.** Now is the time to eliminate this expensive albatross. Sort through and toss what's not needed, re-home what's going to the kids, and donate (and take the tax credit for) things that are no longer useful.

You can help your clients tackle this project by sharing a list of local downsizing specialists, Ebay valets ([ebay.com/s/valet](http://ebay.com/s/valet)) and people who specialize in helping sell unneeded and unwanted stuff. It shouldn't cost anything other than a percentage of the sales price to use these services.

## 4. PRESCRIPTION SAVINGS

**Often, prescription drugs are both necessary and expensive.** Despite this, most people simply select a pharmacy and stick with it, even though drug prices can vary dramatically—a missed opportunity to save hundreds of dollars a year (or more).

Encourage your clients to comparison shop. Take a list of all prescriptions to each local pharmacy and ask for itemized price quotes. You can also check local prices using online tools like [WebMD.com/rx](http://WebMD.com/rx) or [GoodRx.com](http://GoodRx.com).

Even with insurance, it's sometimes cheaper to pay out of pocket than the "co-pay" on certain drugs. Additionally, it's a good idea to ask about discounts for cash payments.

**Online pharmacies** – Another option is to comparison shop for mail-order drugs. This has the added bonus of automatically delivering monthly meds without the hassle of picking them up! Online shoppers need to be sure the quality of the pharmacy they select is assured. Start by visiting [PharmacyChecker.com](http://PharmacyChecker.com).

## 5. SAVVY SHOPPING

**Major sales aren't limited to Black Friday or Cyber Monday.** Every year, various big-ticket items are often discounted seasonally, including:

**Cars** – current inventory goes on sale right before or after the newest models arrive in the fall.

**Computers** – late March/early April (new models rolling out) and August/September (back to school).

**Large appliances** – September/October (new models rolling out). Be sure to ask for free delivery, hookup and old appliance disposal. Refrigerators are cheapest in May.

**Televisions** – Thanksgiving weekend and January (or early February) when old models are cleared out and new ones arrive in time for the Super Bowl.

**Outdoor** – lawnmowers in April and after Labor Day (clearance), along with grills; patio furniture in October/November.

**Mattresses** – Memorial Day weekend sales (negotiate for even-lower-than-advertised prices)

## 6. OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO SAVE

Amazon has become many online shoppers' go-to source, but do you know about several sites that track Amazon's prices? Use [CamelCamelCamel.com](http://CamelCamelCamel.com) or [Keepa.com](http://Keepa.com) to view price history charts and set up price drop alerts to save on purchases.

Even with great deals, however, remember to keep the focus on "living large"—in other words, using your time and energy to buy only what you need at the best possible prices! 