

## Graduation Time ... Money Tips for New Grads

You just graduated and your whole life is in front of you. If you are just graduating from college, you have insane advantages when it comes to money. Whether you want to start your financial independence journey, get your dream job, or simply make more money, there are actually good ideas for anyone at any age. But if you're under 25 you have the greatest money advantage of all – time. And don't be too hard on yourself or get discouraged. Life teaches you how to live it.

I've made a lot of money mistakes when I was younger. I wish I could-of would a know all I know today about money back then. Ahh ... small stuff actually works.

### Best Money Tips for College Graduates

- 1.** Save at least 20%-25% of your paycheck, and then blow the rest having as much fun as you can. Absolutely, while it's important to save as much money as possible if you can hit that 20-25% mark you will be okay. You can spend guilt-free knowing that you are saving more than 99% of people and getting a massive head start on building wealth. Try to escape living paycheck to paycheck as quickly as possible.
- 2.** Start tracking your money & investments in one place, even if you don't have much money. Sign up for Mint, so you can track your savings, account balances, and investing performance. Tracking your savings and investment returns consistently will motivate you to save more.
- 3.** Build better money habits. As my trainer, tells me ... It only takes 30 days to build a habit. Small, simple changes will lead to massive gains over time. You can apply this to money, savings and future planning goals.
- 4.** Don't wait for the perfect job, it probably won't come right off the bat. Too many people wait on the sideline for their big break. Instead get in the game, create, networking, and get a job as close, or as near, as possible to the one you want. A vast majority of life's opportunities come through personal connections, not applying to a job posting you found online. Most job searches are rigged, so find a way to get in the side door.
- 5.** Take risks. Seriously, too many youngsters are too conservative today. Don't be afraid to make mistakes. It's how you'll learn and grow. Most people have a least a few jobs before they find their perfect career and your perfect job is probably something you haven't even figured out yet. Don't feel pressure. As long as you are learning, growing, and hustling you will make it happen.
- 6.** Minimize your biggest expenses (housing, eating, and commuting). Do everything you can to live rent free and you might even be able to afford to buy a lot cheaper than renting. Housing expenses will likely always be your biggest expenses so do everything you can to reduce or eliminate it and invest the difference. Another big expense is food, create some ideas on how to save money eating out. The third biggest expenses are typically commuting, plan accordingly.
- 7.** Start investing, even if you have student loans. A lot of people fear investing or think they must wait until they have paid down their debt to invest. This is so not true and in fact, check out this author Lynn Richards, she keeps it real and one of my simple and favorite books is *Living Check to Monday*. Its Yes, she is a mortgage guru... but her principles are easy and basic for any financial concern in life. You have time on your side. Start investing for your tomorrow. Time is the biggest investing advantage of all. Use it.
- 8.** Put as much into your 401k as possible, beyond just the employer match. Definitely, make sure you contribute enough to get your employer match if you have one (typically 3-6%) since it's free money. But a lot of people make the mistake of stopping at the employer match. Contribute as much as you can. It's important to remember that your 401k contributions are deducted from your taxable income, so you only pay tax on the money and interest when you take the money out (long into the future!), not when you put it in. If you have the option of a Roth 401k do it! Set-up a Roth IRA (individual retirement account) at a company like Vanguard and start making contributions. You can invest in almost anything in a Roth IRA. You can also use your Roth IRA as an emergency fund because you can always remove the money that you put in at any time.

**9. Keep Learning New Skills** – Just because you are done with school doesn't mean the learning stops. If you want to really make more money, the learning is just beginning. Book smarts + Street Smarts + Skills = \$\$ Learn as many of the skills that will be most in-demand in the future as you can. Opportunities are created through connections and selling the skills you have. Focus your time on both learning AND doing. When you learn through experience you can learn at least twice as much twice as quick.

**10. Figure out how much you owe on your student loans and evaluate the benefits of consolidating and/or refinancing your student loans.** So many people with student loan debt have high-interest rates and you can save a ton of money simply refinancing your student loans for free. First, check out how much money you owe and what your interest rates are on the Federal Student Loan. Start paying off your student loans and pay down credit card debt as soon as you can – the longer you defer the more excuses you will make and not pay them off. Pay down your highest interest rate first.

**11. Find a side hustle and diversify your income streams as soon as you can.** In my opinion, too many people think that a full-time job is enough and that it's too difficult to side hustle. Here are the best sides hustles that I've found and done myself. I'm a big believer in side-hustling to invest and build skills, not simply make extra money. I look at instructors at Equinox, they have a full-time job and make their passion of teaching Barre or Cycling their side hustle. They are doing two things, hopefully, taking that side hustling money and investing in their future and doing something they love. Also, when you diversify your income streams, you make more money and diversify your risk, so if you lose one income stream you can rely on others.

**12. Start a blog and build your brand.** Having a platform, even if you only write a few times a month, can open up tremendous money-making and personal growth opportunities. Sharing your story is incredibly powerful and you will grow from the experience. Trust me, blogging is fun. Check out my [www.joannainthecity.com](http://www.joannainthecity.com) or [www.joannpicardi.com](http://www.joannpicardi.com) blog!! This is my side hustle, LOL!! You'll learn a ton of valuable skills and reflect during the process. Self-awareness is essential to building wealth and writing down your ideas and thoughts regularly will help you grow. Make sure you chill as hard as you hustle. Last, but not least, while I'm a big believer in hustling hard while you are young since the investment of your time, connections AND money will all compound over your lifetime, make sure you chill out too. It's never been easier to burn out. I see 25 years old burnt out all the time. I used to be one of them. Take a deep breath. Disconnect. Meditate go to Equinox and Do yoga. Be still. Your energy isn't infinite. Take time to recover.

I know that we sometimes say we will get to it and ... time goes by and find ourselves overwhelmed. I truly hope that you have tremendous success in your future personally and profitably.

Any questions and even if it's a trivial question... just reach out!

Happy Summer 😊

*Joanna Picardi*

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"Relationship is Everything"

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