

Tidy Up

YOUR
GIFT CARDS



Gift Card
Girlfriend



GiftCards.com



Tidy Up

YOUR GIFT CARDS BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

The longer you hold onto a gift card, the more likely you'll lose the card, forget to use it, find out the balance has been reduced by fees or discover that the gift card is no longer usable. It doesn't have to be that way. If you understand how gift cards work and make a plan to use each one right away, you're more likely to get all the value from your gift cards.

Follow this easy step-by-step approach to gather, organize and put your gift cards to good use!

1 STEP

GATHER AND SORT YOUR GIFT CARDS

Look for unused gift cards in your wallet, purse, desk drawers and sock drawers. Get 'em all out. Check for unused egift cards on your smartphone, email and social media accounts as well.

SORT YOUR GIFT CARDS INTO THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

- Promotional gift cards
- General purpose prepaid cards (e.g., Visa® or Mastercard® gift cards, etc.)
- Store gift cards
- Restaurant gift cards
- Other gift cards

2 STEP

CHECK GIFT CARD BALANCES AND EXPIRATION DATES

On the back of each gift card, you should find a telephone number to call and/or a website address to check for balance inquiry, expiration and usage information.

Using the worksheet, record the name, balance and expiration date (if applicable) of every gift card you own. Read the fine print on each card and make a note of any restrictions. For example, some egift cards may only be usable online. Some physical gift cards are only usable in stores.

TIP

Since you can use a card number online without having the physical plastic in hand, avoid recording the full gift card numbers unless the worksheet can be secured.



3 STEP

MAKE A PLAN FOR EACH CARD

With the gift cards gathered and organized into categories, the next step is to think about how you'll use each one. In addition to redeeming the cards, consider repurposing the gift cards you are not likely to use. Here are some suggestions:

REDEEM THE GIFT CARD

Treat the gift card like the gift it was intended to be by spending it on yourself. Go out to dinner, buy a new blouse or book that spa treatment you deserve.

SELL THE GIFT CARD

Reputable gift card resellers buy national brand gift cards for less than face value. If giving up a percentage of the balance bothers you, remember that getting some cash back is better than holding onto a gift card you will never use.

REGIFT THE GIFT CARD

If a gift card doesn't work for you, regift it to someone more likely to use the card. Just double-check the card's balance and expiration date before wrapping it up with a bow.

CASH IT OUT

In some states, stores and restaurants are required to cash out gift cards with balances below the state-mandated threshold. In California, for example, once a merchant gift card falls below \$10, the merchant is required to give the customer cash back for the unused portion of the gift card. Check your state gift card laws to see if a gift card can be cashed out.

BUY A PRESENT FOR SOMEONE ELSE

Think of upcoming birthday parties, graduations and other gift-giving celebrations on your calendar. Use a gift card to buy a present you would have had to buy anyway.

DONATE THE GIFT CARD

Donate a gift card to a local school, shelter or non-profit organization and ask for a donation receipt for your taxes. The recipient can redeem the gift card for supplies or raffle it off at the next fundraiser.

BUY ITEMS TO DONATE

Rather than donate the gift card itself, use it to purchase items to donate instead. Books, batteries, blankets, socks and hygiene products are popular items on donation lists. This is a good way to use a gift card that is about to expire.

GIVE IT AWAY "JUST BECAUSE"

Give a restaurant gift card to a college student, a movie gift card to a single parent or a spa gift card to a hardworking teacher. Hand a grocery store or fast food gift card to a person in need. You don't need a note or a reason, just give the gift card to someone who needs it more than you do.

TIP

Use the full value of a gift card when making a purchase. A couple of dollars left on a card can be annoying and sometimes difficult to spend.



Gift Card Tips

KEEP CARDS VISIBLE (TO YOU!)

The saying, "out of sight, out of mind," describes the main reason people forget to use their gift cards. Keep gift cards where you are most likely to remember to use them. Here are a few suggestions:

- Keep gift cards in your wallet next to the debit or credit card you use most often.
- Keep gift cards you plan to use online next to your computer.
- Add gift cards to your mobile wallet.
- Flag or mark egift cards in your inbox.
- Add gift cards to merchant accounts so the credit is available next time you shop (e.g. Amazon, iTunes and Starbucks).



SET REMINDERS

In addition to storing gift cards where they will stay "top of mind," set a date to use each gift card. Add a note to your calendar or set a reminder in your mobile device to help you follow through.

UNDERSTAND GIFT CARD LAWS

Though there are multiple state and federal gift card laws, the ones that affect consumers the most are rules around expiration and fees. Here's what you need to know:

FEES AFTER 12 MONTHS

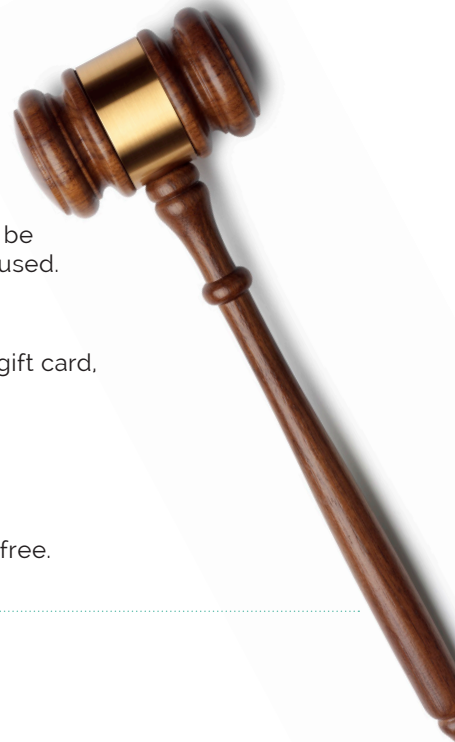
Under federal law, if a card is not used for 12 consecutive months, a monthly non-use fee may be deducted from the balance starting on the 13th month until the balance is \$0 or the card gets used.

EXPIRATION AFTER 5 YEARS

Under federal law, a gift card or general purpose prepaid card (e.g., Visa gift card, Mastercard gift card, etc.) generally may not expire less than 5 years from the date of purchase.

EXCEPTIONS

- These restrictions don't apply to reward cards and promotional cards.
- Some states prohibit expiration and fees on merchant gift cards.
- Many stores and restaurants voluntarily issue gift cards that have no expiration and are fee-free.



KEEP USED GIFT CARDS AS NEEDED FOR RETURNS

A gift card can be safely tossed or deleted when you are certain that items purchased with the gift card will not need to be returned. Though many merchants will issue a refund via a new gift card or a merchandise return card, some stores automatically credit the card used to make the original purchase. If that happens, you might need to know the gift card number in order to access the funds or get a replacement plastic.

