

# MONEY DATE GUIDE

## Agenda & Checklist

Periodic money dates are essential to working together for financial success. You can't manage what you don't measure, and these dates provide the perfect space for you and your spouse to sit down together and examine all aspects of your finances to make sure you're on the right track.

### Schedule a time.

First things' first – make sure you both agree on a day and time for your date. Then stick to it! Don't push your money date off or let something else take over this scheduled time.

### Gather what you need.

Before coming together to talk, make sure you have everything you need. Grab your laptop so you can check in with online accounts or review everything on [Mint.com](https://www.mint.com), your account statements, your list of goals and the progress points on each of them that designate periodic financial wins, your monthly budget (for the past month and the upcoming month), and anything else that helps you track your personal finances.

### Take care of any necessary tasks.

Pay any bills that are due, update account information as necessary, and schedule anything that you need to take care of (like calling a service provider to ask for a discount, or scheduling a meeting with your financial planner). If you have anything that needs to be organized and updated, like receipts or other paperwork your files, do it now.

### Review the previous month.

Start evaluating your finances by checking out your activity from the previous month. Examine every angle of your budget:

- What your income was
- What was automatically deducted from your income (retirement contributions, taxes, insurance, etc.)
- How much you spent on necessary expenses (bills, mortgage/rent, utilities, gas, groceries)
- How much you spent on discretionary purchases (things like entertainment, meals out, and shopping)
- How much you contributed to debt repayment (if applicable)
- How much you contributed to savings
- Your income minus your expenses – was there a surplus?

### Check your accounts.

Quickly review your online accounts: checking, savings, credit cards, loan balances, bills, retirement savings, etc. Look through the last months' activity to ensure there are no errors and to make sure your budget reflects the same activity as your accounts do.

### Track everything.

Conclude analyzing your finances by tracking everything. Include savings, debts, investments, and income. Then calculate your net worth. All these steps allow you to see the details and the big picture on your finances.

### Discuss the numbers.

Once you have the most recent numbers, take a moment to talk about them. Did you overspend in any of your budget categories? Why? Is there anything you can agree to do for next month that will help you cut back on costs and spending? Or maybe you had a budget surplus. Can you identify how you were able to save more than you expected? How can you do that again next month? Be sure to transfer that money over to savings or debt repayments, as well!

### Examine financial goals.

Next, look at how these numbers affected your current goals. If you were able to put another repayment toward your debt, look at how you're chipping away at the total. If you contributed to retirement, note how much is in your nest egg now. Keep track of these numbers and use them to track your progress during future money dates.

### Talk about your goals.

When you record how much progress you've made, see if it's time to celebrate a financial win. If it is, make plans to do so! If not, take a moment to talk about your goals and why they're important to you. You can help keep each other motivated and remind one another why you're working hard to save up to buy a house, or to prepare financially to start a family, or to build up your emergency savings so you have the stability to try something like starting your own business or taking a year to travel the world.

### Check in with each other.

Now is also a good time to check in not just with the numbers, but with each other. Make sure you give one another a moment to talk about their thoughts and opinions on the state of your finances. Share any suggestions for improvements, or express if something's bothering you.

### Make adjustments.

If you need to make changes in the next month, make a plan to do so.

## Things to Remember

Remain open and honest during your dates, and don't hold anything back – but remember that you're a team, and you're working toward financial success together. Take turns talking and listening, and never try to keep secrets or hide something from each other.

Working towards your biggest financial goals takes time and hard work. Encourage and support each other, and be there for one another. By taking action, you're making excellent progress toward working your wealth and accomplishing what's most important to you. You've got this!

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