



# BalanceWorks® Newsletter

December 2014 | Written by the work/life experts at eni



## Budgeting for the Holidays

The holiday season is officially upon us! Of course, the holidays are a time of joy, togetherness, and generosity, but with this, also comes a significant financial burden. If you find yourself strapped for cash around the holidays, use the following tips to avoid overspending this season.

### Gift Giving

A huge expense during the holidays is buying gifts. There are gifts for immediate family members, extended family, significant others, friends, co-workers, party hosts, your children's teachers, and the list goes on... The inclination to be generous is natural, but you never want to go into debt buying presents. To curb this:

**Whittle your List** – Remember you do not have to buy gifts for every person in your life. With extended family, you can set up a Secret Santa. Have the entire family place their name in a hat, then have everyone choose one name and only buy a gift for that person. Instead of buying gifts for everyone in your circle of friends, celebrate the season with a fun holiday “date” that

everyone can enjoy together. If you are low on money, you can always opt out of your company's gift giving festivities.

**Stick to your List** – After you have decided who you are buying gifts for, you need to decide what you are buying. Create a list and conduct some research on where you can buy each gift at the lowest price. Try to avoid picking up extra gifts that catch your eye as these can really add up and cause you to overspend.

**Get Creative** – Gifts do not have to be expensive or extravagant. Remember the old adage, “it's the thought that counts”. There is nothing wrong with giving loved ones homemade gifts or baked goods. It's a safe bet that your best friend would appreciate a tin of your world famous homemade cookies over a scarf you picked up at the department store. Sentimental gifts are also a great idea. Scrapbooks and framed pictures always make people smile. Giving a gift that you have obviously put a great deal of thought into is generally more appreciated than a random gift regardless of cost. Imagine your wife's reaction if you

For more information or support on holiday budgeting, contact the work/life experts at **BalanceWorks®** by calling:

**1.800.327.2255**

eni's BalanceWorks® program is a confidential 24/7 service provided by your employer to help achieve work/life balance.





saved and framed the ticket stubs from the first movie you saw together – that beats a new toaster every time!

## Hosting

Another often overlooked, but substantial expense is hosting holiday gatherings. Even if you don't host a "party" just having family over for a holiday dinner can be costly.

**Food & Beverage** – Just because you are hosting a holiday gathering, the responsibility to provide all the food does not have to fall on you. You can have a Pot Luck style party where everyone brings a dish to share. If that's not your style, you can provide the main dish then ask different guests to bring a certain thing – cheese and crackers, wine, mashed potatoes, a pumpkin pie, etc, and it will combine to equal a complete meal. You can also host a holiday "cocktail party", where you provide drinks and appetizers instead of a whole meal. On the flip side of that, you can schedule your holiday gathering a bit later, after dinner, and simply provide an array of yummy deserts.

**Decorations** – Everyone loves to decorate for the holidays and provide a festive feel to their gatherings. However, if you are on a tight budget, decorating is not a necessity; remember your guests come for the good company and fun. There are also many inexpensive ways to add a little holiday flair to your gatherings. You can purchase matching festive paper plates, napkins, and cups for a holiday feel. You can also get creative and

## Holiday Punch

Instead of buying a bunch of different beverages, get a great bang for your buck by making some holiday punch for your guests to enjoy!

### Ingredients:

4 cups Cranberry Juice Cocktail  
8 cups prepared lemonade  
2 Cups Orange Juice  
1 bottle of ginger ale  
1 orange, sliced

### Directions:

In a large punch bowl, combine cranberry juice cocktail, lemonade, and orange juice. Refrigerate for 2 hours or more. When ready to serve, pour in the ginger ale. Garnish each glass with an orange slice.  
\*If you prefer a spiked punch, add some rum for a kick\*

make beautiful homemade decorations. Check out Pinterest for some ideas. Finally, hanging up a few strands of holiday lights dresses up any party!

***\*Remember that eni's Personal Assistants are available to provide our members with additional money saving tips for the holidays\****

For more information about holiday budgeting, contact the work/life experts at BalanceWorks® by calling

**1.800.327.2255**

eni's BalanceWorks® program is a confidential 24/7 service provided by your employer to help achieve work/life balance.