

45 Ways to Earn Extra Money



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INTRODUCTION

The number one piece of personal financial advice that you're likely to come across is that you should spend less than you earn. Though there are two sides to that equation, many (if not most) people focus on the first half – the spending.

Expenses < Income

In my opinion, that's a mistake. Yes, an awful lot of people make poor spending decisions and could clearly benefit from trimming their expenses. But you can only cut so much fat before you reach bone. At that point, what next?

I'll tell you what's next... Flip it around and start taking steps to increase your income. Whether you're struggling to make ends meet or are looking for a bit of extra money for weekend fun, there are tons of options out there.

Income > Expenses

With that in mind, I decided to assemble this guide to making extra money. Note that the suggestions run the gamut. That's by design. My hope is that just about everyone will find *something* in here that works for their situation.

And even if you don't find anything actionable in this list, I'm hoping that it will stimulate some creative thinking. With that in mind, if you have any suggestions for improvement or things that I may have missed, please [let me know](#).

Happy reading!

Cheers, Michael

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P.S. Yes, I'm aware that the inequalities above are mathematically equivalent. ☺

EARNING MORE MONEY AT WORK

For starters, let's consider the obvious: your current job. Assuming that you have one, your job is probably your greatest asset. Why not leverage it for even more?

1. **Ask for a raise.** By far the simplest way to increase your income is to ask your current employer for a raise. To be successful, you'll need to make a compelling case so be sure to do your homework. It helps to know what others in similar positions are earning – salary comparison websites can be a great resource for this – but it helps even more if you can document what sort of value you're providing that might otherwise be overlooked.
2. **Position yourself for a promotion.** This is really an extension of point #1, though it's more of a long-term suggestion. If you're intent on increasing your income, double down on your efforts at work. Go above and beyond the call of duty on a daily basis, and take advantage of any training opportunities that you can find. In short, do whatever you can to excel. And don't forget to keep your ear to the ground for any opportunities that might come up.
3. **Volunteer to work overtime.** If you're paid on an hourly basis, volunteer to work overtime. Assuming that your employer allows it, picking up an extra shift here or there can be a great way to pad your paycheck – especially since overtime is typically paid at greater than the standard rate.
4. **Volunteer to work holidays.** Related to the above... Volunteer to pick up holiday hours. Here again, this is a great way to pad your paycheck since many employers pay extra for holiday hours.
5. **Look for a new job.** A great way to increase your income is to find another job. This isn't to say that you necessarily have to take it – though that's always an option – but having an offer from another employers is a great way to bolster your request for a raise. And if it doesn't work out with your current employer, you can always move on to greener pastures.
6. **Moonlight in your area of expertise.** This doesn't technically happen at work, but you're using your job skills so I'm putting it here... Consider putting your job skills to work after hours. Consulting, coaching, you name it.

EARNING MONEY ON THE SIDE

Next up... Side gigs. We'll start by considering "real world" opportunities (online opportunities will be covered in the following section). Note that some of these things can be done alongside a regular job and others can't.

7. **Start substitute teaching.** My wife actually does this and really enjoys it. No, [the pay isn't that great](#), especially not in our area, but... Substitute teaching is very flexible (you're always free to decline) and the barrier to entry isn't too high. It also meshes quite well with our kids' school schedules.
8. **Become a babysitter.** Babysitting can be a great way of earning money on the side. It can be both lucrative and flexible. Just be sure you like – or at least can tolerate – spending extended periods of time with someone else's kids...
9. **Become a pet sitter.** If you like working with animals, offer your services as a pet sitter. This sort of work can be sporadic, but the time commitment tends to be low and flexible. Opportunities for this sort of thing are most common during the summer travel season and over the holidays.
10. **Do lawncare.** More and more people – my wife and I included – have started outsourcing their lawncare. While there's a lot of competition in this niche, I know a couple of people who make good money cutting grass on the side.
11. **Clean gutters.** One of my least favorite jobs around the house is cleaning out the gutters in the spring and (especially) fall. I would pay good money to have this detestable chore taken care of, but I've had a hard time finding someone to tackle the job for me.
12. **Shovel or plow snow.** Yes, this one is geographically restricted and highly seasonal, but it's also highly profitable. When I was a kid, we had a friend who made an absolute killing plowing parking lots and driveways after major snowstorms. With the right equipment, you can make a ton of money.
13. **Housecleaning.** Another area in which many people are hiring outside help is housecleaning. Though there are maid services out there, a lot of people prefer to hire – and pay a premium for – a trustworthy *individual* instead of relying on a somewhat anonymous (and varied) cleaning crew.

14. **Office cleaning.** Related to the above, there's a lot of money to be made cleaning offices after hours. While big companies typically have services for this, smaller outfits are more apt to hire an individual. In fact, both my wife and I made money by cleaning offices during our formative years.
15. **Find odd jobs on Craigslist.** Willing to do other sorts of odd jobs but at a loss as to how to find them? Look no further than Craigslist. There are tons of people out there looking (and willing to pay) for help around the house. But please remember: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
16. **Do tax prep on the side.** Companies like H&R Block, Jackson Hewitt, etc. typically hire (and train) temp employees to [prepare tax returns](#) during tax season, so this can be a good (albeit seasonal) source of extra income.
17. **Do direct sales.** I'm thinking here of things like Mary Kay, Avon, Thirty-One, and the like. I'm not a fan of direct sales, primarily because these programs are usually built on an MLM model where those that get in early profit from those who join later. Nonetheless, I do know some people who have done (or at least claim to have done) reasonably well with this sort of thing.
18. **Catering.** While you might not be up for opening your own catering business, there are tons of opportunities to earn extra money during evenings and on weekends by doing setup, serving, and/or take down for a catering service.
19. **Pizza delivery.** Dave Ramsey is fond of advising debt-laden listeners to get a job delivering pizzas – and for good reason. If you're willing to put in the effort, you can make a good bit of money outside of normal work hours.
20. **Take on a paper route.** Yes, people still do read the newspaper. Really, they do! And you know what that means, right? Someone needs to deliver them. While you'll have to work hard for your money, you can knock out your route during the pre-dawn hours, meaning that it won't interfere with your workday.
21. **Rent out a spare room.** Depending on your living situation, you can generate a decent (and largely passive) side income by renting out a spare room. This won't work for everyone, but it can be a great way to defray your living costs.
22. **Teach a musical instrument.** If you're proficient with a musical instrument, consider offering lessons. This is the sort of thing can easily be done in the evening and on weekends, so it works well alongside a job.

23. **Start tutoring.** Do you have an aptitude for particular academic subjects? If so, tutoring can be a great way to turn a buck. Familiarize yourself with courses being taught at nearby schools and then advertise your services. You'd be surprised how many parents are willing to pay to give their kids a leg up.
24. **Teach a language.** If you're fluent in a second (or third) language, consider offering lessons. If that's not your cup of tea, you could advertise yourself as a conversational partner for those looking to practice speaking another language. These sorts of gigs are more common than you might think.
25. **Teach swimming lessons.** Do you love to swim? If becoming a lifeguard (above) isn't your cup of tea, what about teaching swimming lessons at a local pool? A number of people, both young and old, make good money doing this.
26. **Become a lifeguard.** Speaking of swimming... If you're a strong swimmer, consider becoming a lifeguard at a local pool or beach. While rates vary by locale, seasonal lifeguards can make upwards of \$20/hour.
27. **Referee local sporting events.** Love sports? Then consider becoming a referee (or umpire) for local sports leagues. Most of these events take place outside of normal work hours and you can get paid quite well – especially if you get a tournament gig. Contact your local park & rec department to get started.
28. **Work concessions at sporting events.** While concession stands are often staffed by people who are working to raise money for a cause, that's not always the case. If you'd like to make some extra money while being close to the action, working a concession stand can get you in the door.
29. **Collect recyclables for cash.** When I was a kid, we used to head to the local stadium after major sporting events to collect aluminum cans. We'd then haul them to a recycling center and head home with a pocketful of money. This can be especially lucrative in states with a deposit – though this often makes can/bottles harder to find since people are better about turning them in.
30. **Sort coins.** With precious metal prices at sky-high levels, you can make decent money sorting coins. Half dollars are a good place to start. They were 90% silver prior to 1965 and 40% silver from 1965-1970. Both are worth way more than face value. Order rolls from one bank, search them for winners, and dump (re-deposit) the unwanted coins at another bank.

31. **Grow and sell produce.** If you have a green thumb, consider growing and selling produce. The local farmer's market is a great option for this, but there are others. For example, on the way home from work in the summer, I drive by a "self serve" produce stand out in front of someone's house. You can stop by, pick up what you want, and drop your payment in a lockbox.
32. **Sell your plasma.** When I was in college, a number of my friends made money selling their plasma. I did this once myself – but only once. I've never been crazy about needles so it just didn't last. But if you're not a wimp like me, you can snag some extra cash with minimal effort.
33. **Become a research subject.** If you live near a research university, consider serving as a guinea pig. I'm not talking about doing anything dangerous. But if you keep your eyes open (newsgroups, the student newspaper, campus bulletin boards, etc.), you can find plenty of routine studies that are in need of subjects, and many researchers are willing to pay for your time.
34. **Have a garage sale.** This isn't a particularly sustainable source of income, but it's a great way to make some extra money in a pinch. Go through your closets and other storage areas to find stuff you could do without. Also consider involving your friends – bigger sales are typically more successful.
35. **Make and sell crafts.** Instead of selling your odds and ends, a more sustainable source of income would be to make and sell crafts. Consider selling at local festivals, church bazaars, school functions, etc. Or try sites like eBay and Etsy where you can reach a much broader audience.

EARNING MONEY ONLINE

And finally... Earning a bit of extra cash online.

36. **Sell your stuff online.** Related to the garage sale idea (above), identify any high(er) value items that might sell for more if you had a broader audience. eBay and Craigslist can be a great way of selling these items for a premium.
37. **Stock photos.** Love to take pictures? Then consider selling them on a stock photo website. Believe it or not, there's an absolutely *enormous* market for [quality stock photos](#). In fact, nearly all of the photos that I use in my articles are sourced from a commercial stock photo website.

38. **Freelance web design.** Do you have an eye for design and basic html, css, etc. skills? If so, then consider doing freelance web design. Start by checking out the websites of local businesses and contacting those in need of a refresh.
39. **Freelance writing.** Do you write well and have a passion for any topics in particular? If so, consider freelance writing. There are a ton of websites out there in a wide variety of niches that are looking for good writers.
40. **Do odd jobs online.** There are a number of sites out there (such as Fiverr or the like) that allow you to do odd computer-related jobs in return for cash. Maybe you're a good proof-reader or a whiz with Photoshop. Whatever you do well, someone out there is almost certainly willing to pay you for it.
41. **Start a weblog.** Yeah, I know. Easier said than done, right? But you *can* make decent money online. Just be aware that it requires a good bit of hard work and patience, as well as a willingness to learn. Oh, and be sure to pick a topic that you're passionate about or you'll never be able to stick to it. Trust me. 😊
42. **Design and sell t-shirts.** This is something that my oldest son has recently developed an interest in doing. If you're creative and have reasonable graphic design skills, you can [sell t-shirts online](#) through a number of outlets.
43. **Amazon's Mechanical Turk.** I've [played around with this](#) a bit in the past. Honestly, I was turned off by the boring tasks and low pay rates. That being said, many of the things that you're asked to do are *very* easy and they can be done on your own schedule.
44. **Online surveys and trial offers.** Websites such as [CashCrate](#) pay you to complete online surveys and trial offers for a variety of products and services. You won't make huge bucks, but the tasks are pretty easy and you can do a decent number of them in a relatively short period of time.
45. **Churn credit card bonuses.** You can easily pull down \$100-\$200 at a time by signing up for [credit cards with signup bonuses](#). If you batch your applications together into a single day you can minimize the hit on [your credit score](#).

WHAT NEXT?

Okay, so now you have some ideas about how to put a bit of extra cash in your pocket. What next? Simple. Invest. Put that money to work for you. Not sure how to get started? No worries...

What follows is a rundown of three excellent books that will get you pointed in the right direction. Oh, and don't forget... I also cover a wide variety of investing-related topics on [Financial Ramblings](#). Please be sure to check it out.

[The Millionaire Next Door](#) by Thomas J. Stanley & William D. Danko

This is an incredibly accessible book that I found to be chock full of useful financial insights. The authors identify the defining characteristics of the wealthy and show that reaching the promised land requires sacrifice, discipline, and hard work.

[Investing Made Simple](#) by Michael R. Piper

This is an outstanding book that provides a concise (under 100 pages) overview of the ins and outs of investing – basically Cliffs Notes for the investing world. Highly recommended, especially if you're just starting out.

[The Four Pillars of Investing](#) by William J. Bernstein

If you're looking for a bit more detail on investing in a still-very-readable format, this book is a great choice. Bernstein covers the theory, history, psychology, and business of investing while teaching you how to build a winning portfolio.

And with that, I will bid you adieu. Thanks for reading, good luck, and please don't be a stranger. You know [where to find me](#). 😊

----- The End -----