

# 5 FINANCIAL TIPS THAT ACTUALLY WORK



SIMPLE : REAL : ACTIONABLE

# 1 Live within your means

Spending less than you earn isn't about missing out; it's about taking control. It helps reduce stress, avoid debt, and build a financial buffer for the things that really matter.

## **Actionable steps you can take:**

- Track your spending: Use a budgeting app like \*BudgetBuddie, a simple spreadsheet or even pen and paper. Knowing where your money goes is the first step.

\*(access BudgetBuddie using the promo code RIVALWEALTH to enjoy full unlimited access for free for 1 month).

- Know the difference between needs and wants: Essentials are things like rent, groceries, and power. Wants are the extras like takeaways, subscriptions and impulse buys.
- Tell your money where to go: Set a plan for your income before it disappears. Pay yourself first and allocate amounts for bills, savings, and discretionary spending so you're not left wondering where it all went.
- Review your habits: Are you spending out of boredom, stress, or convenience? Small changes can make a big difference.

## 2 Build a rainy-day emergency fund

Life throws curveballs - unexpected job loss, car repairs or vet bills.

A rainy-day fund gives you breathing room and a financial buffer, so you don't have to rely on putting emergencies on a credit card.

### **Actionable steps you can take:**

- Open a separate savings account (ideally one that's not too easy to dip into).
- Name this account Emergency only or something similar to stop the temptation of using these funds for everyday expenses
- Start small: Even \$5 - \$10 a week adds up. Set up an automatic payment on payday.
- The goal is to save towards 3 months of essential expenses, or set yourself a lower goal first.
- Use windfalls wisely, like tax refunds, bonuses, or birthday money? Top up your rainy-day fund.

## 3 Know and maximise your KiwiSaver

Whether you're buying your first home or planning for later life, KiwiSaver helps you save with support from your employer and the government. The earlier you start, the more powerful it becomes. Getting a few simple steps sorted now can add thousands more at retirement!

### **Actionable steps you can take:**

- Know what fund you are in by answering a few questions (often called a risk profile). You'll find out which KiwiSaver fund matches your comfort level with risk. Whether you're someone who likes to play it safe, take a balanced approach, or go for higher returns with more ups and downs. Your age and stage of life also matter. Complete a [KiwiSaver risk profile](#)
- Make sure you're getting the most from your KiwiSaver. If you meet a few simple criteria, the government adds a top-up to your balance each year. It's an easy way to grow your savings, but many people miss out without realising.
- Contact RIVAL Wealth - we can help you check if you're getting everything you're entitled to with KiwiSaver.

## 4 Structure your home loan for flexibility

While no one has a crystal ball, constantly worrying about picking the lowest interest rate can be stressful. The good news? There are ways to spread your interest rate risk and give yourself more financial flexibility.

### Actionable steps you can take:

- Split your home loan: Ask your bank or financial adviser about dividing your loan into two or three portions, each fixed over different terms. You can do this when you first set up your loan or during your fixed rate review.
- Mix it up: Consider a combination of fixed terms and a small portion on a floating or variable rate. This gives you room to move if rates drop or if you want to make extra repayments.
- Plan for the unexpected: If there's a chance of receiving a lump sum (like an inheritance), having part of your loan on a shorter term or floating rate can help you use it without triggering break fees.

Review regularly: Your home loan should evolve with your life. A yearly review helps you stay ahead of rate changes and repayment opportunities

## 5 Adjusting your insurance excess

Let's be honest, no one loves paying for insurance. But when something goes wrong and you need to make a claim, you'll be glad you had it. If money's tight, cancelling your cover isn't your only option. Many insurance policies can be adjusted to suit your current situation.

One way to do that is by changing your excess, the amount you pay out of pocket if you make a claim. A higher excess usually means a lower premium, which can help ease monthly costs without losing your safety net.

Actionable steps you can do:

- Check your current excess: If you made a claim tomorrow, how much would you need to pay first?
- Consider increasing it: If you can afford a higher excess, raising it could reduce your premium and free up cash flow. You might even set aside the excess amount in your rainy-day fund so it's ready if needed.
- Talk to your adviser: They can help you find the right balance and liaise with your insurance provider, keeping your cover in place while making it more manageable.
- Avoid going too far: Make sure your excess is still realistic. It's about adjusting, not risking





Money decisions can be emotional, especially when life throws curveballs. That's where we come in. At RIVAL Wealth, we help take the emotion out of tough financial choices and give you clear, practical advice tailored to your situation.

Whether it's KiwiSaver, budgeting, insurance, investments or planning for the future, we'll help you see the full picture and make confident decisions.

It costs nothing to have a chat with one of our financial advisers. No pressure, no obligation, just real advice to help you take control of your financial journey.

This information is of a general nature and is not intended as personalised financial advice. RIVAL Wealth is a Financial Advice Provider (FAP) licenced by the Financial Markets Authority to provide financial advice. Our disclosure document is located at [rivalwealth.co.nz](https://rivalwealth.co.nz) or a written copy is available on request

