

LiveWell: Mid-Life

A Resource for Healthy Living

Volume 1 Issue 2

Spring 2011



Swing Into Summer



The Art of Coupon Clicking

If you're a penny-pincher, you're going to love the latest trend: online coupon clipping. Or should we say, coupon clicking.

That's right. Like everything else these days, coupons have gone high-tech. And with just a little time and research, you'll find bigger bargains and greater savings than ever before.

Groupon® and LivingSocial™ are perhaps the most popular examples. These online group coupon sites save consumers millions of dollars every year by offering at least half off at restaurants, salons, spas and other services with the click of a mouse.

Group coupon sites aren't the only way to save. Many grocery stores, restaurants and large retailers offer online coupons and discounts just by registering on their store Web site. And you no longer have to wait for the Sunday paper; you can clip coupons every day of the week at sites like www.coupons.com.

Another great way to save is with the *HAP Advantage* program which offers HAP members deals on fitness centers, spas, chiropractic, flowers, LASIK, Weight Watchers® and sports merchandise. You'll also find discounts on museums, attractions and other local services.

To learn more, log in at hap.org. Select *Plan Extras* from the right-hand column, then select *HAP Advantage* at the bottom of the page.

HAP Advantage is a value-added program, and the services and products made available under this program are not covered benefits under the Health Alliance Plan (HAP) Subscriber Contract, Alliance Group Insurance Policy, Riders or Member Handbook or otherwise payable by HAP. HAP, its affiliates, agents and assigns make no representations or warranties regarding the quality, price or effectiveness of the services or products, or the credentialing of the providers made available by *HAP Advantage*.

Don't Use Your 401(k) Like an ATM

The 401(k) account always makes a great target for those suddenly in need of cash.

"Don't do it," says Robin Thompson, WXYZ Channel 7 Action News "Money Coach" and



Robin Thompson, M.A.

President of Budget Wise Consulting. "Even if times are tough, I don't advise borrowing from your 401(k). It's not an ATM. You have other options available."

Start by developing a spending plan. List your income and expenses, and then track every penny for a month. This

helps you understand how you're spending (or wasting) money daily.

Next, cut expenses. Downsize, buy a smaller house, eat at home more often, and dump extras like cable and new cars. Increase your income through a part-time job or consulting.

Another option is a Roth IRA, a retirement vehicle made with after-tax contributions, rather than pretax dollars like a traditional IRA. "If you have one, you can withdraw contributions you've made without penalty. Only the earnings carry a penalty if taken early."

Lastly, Robin suggests borrowing from a family member, where you might not have to pay interest. If the bills are mounting, contact your creditors' hardship departments to work out payment arrangements. And then find a financial planner.

For more information and free tools to improve your financial security visit www.choosetosave.org.