

FREE GUIDE · BILLS & SPENDING

The Money Leak Audit

Find the subscriptions, fees and small charges quietly draining your account, and stop them in one evening.

FOUND THIS MONTH

\$641 / year

Streaming B



Cancel

Meditation app



Cancel

Gym



Downgrade

Game pass



Cancel

- 1 Why small charges are so easy to miss
- 2 The 3-question audit, with a real example
- 3 A worksheet, cancel tips and a checklist

BEFORE WE START

The money you never decided to spend

Most people don't overspend in one big moment. Money leaks out in small, automatic charges that renew quietly every month. Each one feels too small to matter. Together, they're often a car payment.

\$111

a month: what the average American now spends on subscriptions.

CNET subscription survey, 2026

\$252

a year spent on subscriptions people don't even use.

CNET subscription survey, 2026

\$133

a month: how far people's quick guess was from their real subscription total, on average.

C+R Research, 2022

Why leaks are so hard to see

- **They're automatic.** You decided once, maybe years ago. You never decide again.
- **They're small.** \$6.99 doesn't set off any alarm bells. Ten of them should.
- **Free trials turn into payments.** The trial ends on a day you're not thinking about it.
- **Prices creep up.** A small increase arrives by email, and the charge just keeps going.
- **They hide in different places.** Some on your card, some in your phone's app store, some on a partner's account.

What you'll have by the end

A full list of every repeating charge, a clear keep / downgrade / cancel decision for each one, the exact amount you've freed up per month and per year, and a plan so new leaks don't sneak back in.

THE AUDIT

Find every leak in one evening

1 Gather your statements

Download the last **three months** of statements for every bank account and card you use. Some charges are only every few months. For yearly renewals, search your email for words like "renewal", "subscription" and "receipt" over the past year.

2 Check your phone's app store

App subscriptions are often billed through your phone, not your card statement. **iPhone:** Settings → your name → Subscriptions. **Android:** Play Store → your profile icon → Payments & subscriptions → Subscriptions.

3 List every repeating charge

Write each one on the worksheet (page 7) with its monthly cost. For yearly charges, divide by 12. Include the boring ones too: phone plan, cloud storage, bank account fees, memberships.

4 Ask the 3 questions

Run every charge through the three questions below, and write down one decision: keep, downgrade or cancel.

1. Did I use it in the last 30 days?

Not "might I use it one day". If the honest answer is no, it's a cancel candidate.

2. Would I sign up today, at this price?

If you saw it for the first time today, would you pay for it? If not, why keep paying?

3. Is there a cheaper way?

An ad-supported plan, a family or shared plan, a yearly price, or something you already pay for that does the same job.

No guilt either way

Keeping something you love is a good decision. The goal is spending on purpose, not spending nothing.

A REAL EXAMPLE

What one evening can find

Here's what a typical audit can look like. Ten repeating charges, none of them dramatic on its own.

CHARGE	PER MONTH	USED IN LAST 30 DAYS?	DECISION
Video streaming A	\$17.99	Yes, most nights	Keep
Video streaming B	\$15.49	Once, two months ago	Cancel
Music	\$11.99	Every day	Keep
Cloud storage	\$2.99	Yes (photo backup)	Keep
Gym	\$39.00	Twice	Downgrade to \$25
Meditation app	\$12.99	No, forgot the free trial	Cancel
News site	\$4.00	Rarely	Cancel
Phone game pass	\$6.99	No	Cancel
Delivery membership	\$9.99	Yes, weekly	Keep
Software (\$99 a year)	\$8.25	Yes, for work	Keep
Total before	\$129.68		

\$53.47

freed up every month by four cancels and one downgrade.

From the example above

\$641.64

freed up over a year, without giving up anything that was actually used.

From the example above

The important part is what happens next: **give that money a job straight away**. Move \$53 a month to savings or to a debt the same day you cancel. Otherwise it just disappears into everyday spending and you never feel the win.

BEYOND SUBSCRIPTIONS

The leaks people forget to check

- **Bank fees.** Monthly account fees, overdraft fees, ATM fees. Many banks have no-fee accounts, or will waive a fee if you ask.
- **Interest on card balances.** Often the biggest leak of all. If you carry a balance, our Debt-Free Roadmap guide shows how to shrink it.
- **Insurance on autopilot.** Car and home insurance often renew at a higher price. Compare quotes once a year before renewal.
- **Phone and internet plans.** Check whether you're paying for more data or speed than you use, or for a promo that ended.
- **Convenience costs.** Delivery fees, service fees and small top-ups. Not wrong, just worth noticing.

How to cancel without the hassle

1 Check the renewal date first

Cancel a few days before it, so you're not charged for another period.

2 Ask before you leave

If you'd actually like to keep it cheaper, say you're thinking of canceling. Some services offer a discount or a pause.

3 Keep proof

Screenshot or save the cancellation confirmation email.

4 Check your next statement

Make sure the charge really stopped. If not, contact the company with your proof.

STAY LEAK-FREE

Stop new leaks before they start

1 Use a "free trial" rule

The moment you start a free trial, put a reminder in your phone for two days before it ends. Decide then, on purpose.

2 Keep a renewal calendar

Add every yearly renewal to your calendar a week before it's due. No more surprise \$99 charges.

3 Use one card for subscriptions

Putting every repeating charge on one card makes your next audit take five minutes instead of an evening.

4 Do a 15-minute mini-audit every 3 months

Scroll that one card's statement and ask the 3 questions again. Prices and habits change.

Mistakes to skip

✗ Only checking your card statement

Phone app stores, PayPal and a partner's card hide charges too.

✗ Canceling everything in a burst of guilt

Then signing back up a month later. Keep what you truly use and enjoy.

✗ Letting the savings vanish

If the freed-up money isn't moved somewhere on purpose, it gets spent without you noticing.

My repeating charges

Where the freed-up money goes now:

PRINT ME

Your money leak checklist

TONIGHT

☐ Download 3 months of statements for every account and card

☐ Check your phone's app store subscriptions

iPhone: Settings → your name → Subscriptions. Android: Play Store → profile → Payments & subscriptions.

☐ Search your email for "renewal", "subscription" and "receipt"

☐ List every repeating charge with its monthly cost

☐ Ask the 3 questions and decide: keep, downgrade or cancel

THIS WEEK

☐ Cancel or downgrade, a few days before each renewal date

☐ Save every cancellation confirmation

☐ Move the freed-up amount to savings or a debt, automatically

☐ Add yearly renewals to your calendar, a week early

EVERY 3 MONTHS

☐ 15-minute mini-audit: scroll your statements, ask the 3 questions again

NEXT STEP

An audit once is good. Never needing one is better.

Leaks come back when nobody is watching the list. We're building our Bills & Spending templates to keep that list for you, so the next audit takes minutes, not an evening.

- ✓ Every bill and subscription in one place, with its renewal date
- ✓ Monthly and yearly totals that update as you type
- ✓ A clear view of where your money actually goes
- ✓ Tick-off tracking so nothing renews by surprise

Try the free Subscription Cost Calculator

You're on our list, so you'll be the first to know when the full templates launch.

Sources

1. CNET annual subscription survey, 2026, as reported by WFSB (July 16, 2026): average \$111 a month on subscriptions; about \$252 a year on unused ones.
<https://www.wfsb.com/2026/07/16/average-american-now-spending-111-month-subscriptions-study-finds/>
2. C+R Research subscription survey of 1,000 US adults (2022), as reported by FOX 5 New York: people misjudged their monthly subscription spending by \$133 on average.
<https://www.fox5ny.com/news/many-underestimate-monthly-subscription-costs-133-survey-2022>

This guide is general information to help you plan, not financial advice. Prices and cancellation steps vary by company and can change. © EasyReadySheets. Free to use and print for yourself; please don't resell or republish it.