

Monthly Budget Checklist

Your step-by-step guide to taking control of your money — by HatterChat

Step 1: Know Your Income

- List all income sources (salary, side hustles, freelance, passive)
- Use NET pay (after taxes), not gross
- Total monthly take-home: \$_____

Step 2: List Your Fixed Expenses

- Rent/Mortgage: \$_____
- Car Payment: \$_____
- Insurance (health, auto, home): \$_____
- Phone/Internet: \$_____
- Subscriptions: \$_____
- Loan Payments: \$_____
- Other Fixed: \$_____
- Total Fixed Expenses: \$_____

Step 3: Estimate Variable Expenses

- Groceries: \$_____
- Gas/Transportation: \$_____
- Dining Out: \$_____
- Entertainment: \$_____
- Personal Care: \$_____
- Clothing: \$_____
- Other Variable: \$_____
- Total Variable Expenses: \$_____

Step 4: Pay Yourself First

- Emergency Fund Deposit: \$_____ (target: 6 months of expenses)
- Retirement Contribution: \$_____
- Savings Goals: \$_____
- Total Savings: \$_____

Step 5: Check the Math

- Income - Fixed - Variable - Savings = \$_____

- If positive: great — add the extra to savings or debt payoff
- If negative: cut variable expenses until it balances
- If zero: you have a zero-based budget — every dollar has a job

Step 6: The 50/30/20 Quick Check

Category	Rule	Your %	Status
Needs (housing, food, insurance)	50% of income	_____%	■ On track
Wants (dining, entertainment, shopping)	30% of income	_____%	■ On track
Savings & Debt Payoff	20% of income	_____%	■ On track

Step 7: Monthly Review (Do This on the 1st)

- Compare last month's budget vs. actual spending
- Identify categories where you overspent
- Adjust this month's budget based on reality
- Celebrate one financial win from last month

Want the full system? Our [Monthly Budget Tracker Spreadsheet \(\\$24.99\)](#) does all of this automatically — 9 tabs including dashboard, debt payoff, savings goals, and net worth tracking.

Use code [HATTER10](#) for 10% off at [hatterchat.com](#)

© 2026 HatterChat — A brand of Mountain Vines, Inc. | [hatterchat.com](#)