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Financial New Year's Resolutions: Using Tech to Stay on Track

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The New Year is symbolic in many respects. It gives you a chance to start fresh and set some goals that can improve your life in ways large and small. But if you're like many people, familiar resolutions like "lose weight" or "go to the gym" slowly fade into darkness by mid-February, leaving you feeling disappointed in yourself.

This year, why not try focusing on a different aspect of your life—your finances? Instead of vowing to slim down, you can work on fattening your wallet with some tech-related resolutions. (And they're probably more sustainable than waking up at 5:00 A.M. to hit the gym before work!)

Making your finances a priority in 2017

Being aware of your finances, staying on budget, and spending less are easy resolutions to adopt. All you have to do is say these three phrases out loud: "I am going to be more cognizant of my finances this year," "I am going to be extremely frugal this year," and finally, "I am not going to spend as much as I did last year." That's it—you're done with your New Year's resolutions.

Only kidding! Simply making these resolutions and hoping for the best isn't going to work. You need to take a more tactical approach to bettering your finances. Fortunately, a number of smartphone apps and other tech tools are available to help you be more disciplined in your budgeting and spending, turning those resolutions into worthwhile, maintainable habits.

There's an app for that!

Mint. One of the first budgeting apps available was [Mint](#)—a program that allows you to see all of your accounts in one place. By creating a log of your purchases, the app helps you keep track of your spending. After building up a large enough sample size of your purchases and transactions, Mint will even start categorizing them automatically. The app will alert you when bills are due and if any fees have been assessed on your linked accounts. In addition, Mint monitors your credit card balance relative to your spending limits, and it will warn you if any balances exceed a certain threshold of available credit.

Digit. Would you like to be better about putting money into your savings account on a regular basis? If so, then [Digit](#) could be the tech solution for you. This service, which also includes an app, monitors your spending patterns via your checking account to calculate a suitable amount to transfer to savings. You also have the option of manually adding money to your savings account by initiating transfer requests. Plus, as a Digit user, you'll receive weekly reports via text message to keep you abreast of your current balances.

Prosper Daily. Given the growing threat of cybercrime, you may be worried about protecting your identity and making sure no one else has access to your hard-earned money. [Prosper Daily](#) helps deter scammers, targeting activity that doesn't seem quite right on your linked accounts. It can



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even track your GPS location to see if your cards are being used elsewhere. For instance, if your card is used and it doesn't match up to your current location, you'll receive an alert via the app to notify you of this discrepancy. Then, you can dispute the charge right from your phone. To provide even more protection, it also performs regular "black market surveillance"—scanning websites and hacker forums to ensure that your personal information is not being traded, bought, or sold.

Mint Bills. If you need help keeping track of when bills are due during the course of the month, this app is for you. With [Mint Bills](#), you can see all of your account balances, transactions, and the due dates of certain bills. It allows you to view your bills (e.g., credit card, insurance, and utilities) in one centralized place, includes a reminder system to help you avoid late fees, and lets you pay bills directly from the app.

Toshl. Skeptical of linking your whole world to your smartphone? More of a do-it-yourselfer when it comes to budgeting and spending? If you're not comfortable uploading *all* of your information and account numbers to the digital world, [Toshl](#) may be the right fit for you. The app allows you to manually enter and categorize transactions as you see fit. It will also notify you when bills are due, analyze trends based on your past spending habits, and allow you to easily export your data to an Excel or PDF file.

Cheers to better financial fitness

In this day and age, using technology to your advantage is a must. With the help of apps available right at your fingertips, you can ensure that you stick to your spending and budgeting resolutions. Here's to greater financial knowledge, organization, and prosperity in the New Year!

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