

# CORE Solutions

Ditch the Debt Month



## IN THIS ISSUE

- Ditch the Debt Month
- 3 Ways to Ditch the Debt
- Monthly Moves: The Hallelujah Stretch
- Recipe: Basil Marinated Mozzarella with Summer Tomatoes

## Ditch the Debt

September was chosen as Healthy Aging Month to raise awareness on physical and mental health, especially for those 45 and older. So we don't alienate our amazing younger coworkers, colleagues, family and friends, it's essential to acknowledge that we're *all* growing older; therefore, we can all equally benefit from improved physical, mental, social and financial well-being. To wrap up our 3-part series on financial health (and prepare for October's focus on mental health awareness), it's worth examining one of the most destructive financial forces known to healthy humankind — **debt**.

If you haven't read Kim Heald's piece on healthcare debt in America, it's worth checking out [here](#). Although healthcare debt is one type of debt millions are saddled with, most of us suffer the weight of several layers of debt. In addition to medical, we have student loans, mortgages, credit cards, personal loans, car payments and even that outstanding Venmo request from that not-so-great date we went on last month. The list goes on. According to the New York Federal Reserve, total household debt in America has risen to a record \$16.2 trillion in the second quarter of 2022. In an environment where everything is more expensive due to soaring inflation, that enormous pile of debt is weighing us all down.

### "Ditch the Debt" continued

But ditching the debt is not the easiest thing in the world. Because what we're talking about isn't just a lack of money. We're also looking at the gamut of stress and negative emotions that accompany it. So much anxiety and depression as month after month, we throw our hard-earned money against what seems like both an immovable force *and* an unstoppable object. On our good days, it can be frustrating. On the bad days, completely demoralizing.

However, there is always a solution. Under almost any set of circumstances, the first thing we absolutely must do is quit denying the debt exists. Denial is a great way to feel better about things. It's a natural coping mechanism. One that works wonders for periods of tremendous stress or trauma. But it's a terrible long-term solution for long-term debt.

The smartest thing you can do with your debt is to face it head-on. That is the number one and best first step to alleviate the stress of having it. Look at everything you owe and calculate it against your essential expenses and your after-tax income. Look closely. There may not be a silver-bullet lying there, but somewhere in the darkness, you'll figure a way to dig out and ditch the debt. The key is to take it one step at a time and steadily pay the debt down. Continue to put money away for your retirement and your savings and look forward with purpose towards the day you'll be debt-free.

Source: [experian.com](https://experian.com)



### 3 Ways to Ditch the Debt

1. List Everything You Owe — If you've been avoiding it, it's time to add up all your outstanding monthly loan payments and minimum credit card payments and determine your monthly minimum payment.
2. Decide How Much You Can Pay Each Month — Make a list of all your basic monthly expenses. Average them over the last few months where you can. Apply this formula:

$$\text{Monthly Income} - \text{Basic Expenses} - \text{Debt} = X$$

**If X is a positive number, use a little bit of it to pay down more debt. If X is a negative number, look for opportunities to cut back, consolidate debt or increase your income.**

3. Pay All of Your Bills on Time Each Month — The best thing you can do for your credit.



## Monthly Moves: The Hallelujah Stretch

Back pain can make us miserable. One cause of back pain is bad posture, something that nearly all of us can relate to. When we're hunched over looking at a computer screen or a phone, we're so focused that we don't even notice the damage we're doing. What was once a heavy or repetitive lifting issue has now become a sitting issue for most of us. Here's an easy pain-relieving stretch that most of us can do at home.

1. Sit in a hard-backed chair with a straight posture.
2. Interlock your fingers and raise your hands up over your head, turning your palms towards the ceiling.
3. Stretch back over the chair, tilting your head back comfortably so you can look up at your arms and the ceiling above you. Hold for 1-2 seconds and release. [Click here for a video demo.](#)

Source: [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com)



## Recipe: Basil Marinated Mozzarella with Summer Tomatoes

It's heirloom tomato season!!! If you like your fruit to be juicy, packed with flavor, and varied in lovely shapes and colors, this is your time of year. These vibrant beauties are one of the summer's sweetest treats. The best way to enjoy them is to keep it simple: turn them into gazpacho, top avocado toast with them, or maybe even throw them in an omelet. But for a real treat, try out this super healthy riff on a classic Caprese salad.

Source: [theviewfromgreatisland.com](https://theviewfromgreatisland.com)

### Ingredients:

- Assorted Heirloom Tomatoes (allow 1 medium tomato per person)
- 8 oz ciliegine fresh mozzarella (cherry-sized fresh mozzarella)
- 2 oz fresh basil
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Salt to taste

### Directions:

1. Drain the liquid from the mozzarella and fit the little balls into a clean jar.
2. Put the basil, oil and lemon juice in the bowl of a food processor and process until it forms a loose puree. Salt to taste, and add more olive oil if it is too thick.
3. Pour the basil sauce over the mozzarella in the jar to cover. Make sure all the cheese is coated with the sauce. Refrigerate until needed. Will keep 2 weeks in the refrigerator.
4. To serve, slice the tomatoes and arrange on a platter, or on individual plates. Add the mozzarella and spoon a little of the basil marinade over them. You can also drizzle the marinade over the tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper and serve immediately.