

Smart Ways to Fight Inflation in 2022

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Whether you're browsing online, shopping at the grocery store, or the fueling up at the gas station, you've probably noticed higher prices.

From supply chain hang-ups, higher shipping and transport costs, ballooning energy demand, labor shortages, and mounds of unspent savings during the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation is an international phenomenon hitting just about everyone. And in March 2022, it reached 8.5%- the highest point in about 40 years.

To help you keep up with the global economy, WCTEL's reliable high-speed fiber internet puts the online marketplace of goods, services, entertainment right at your fingertips! But with inflation seemingly sticking around for the foreseeable future, you may be feeling the squeeze.

So what—if anything—can you do to combat inflation? Are there strategies you can employ to push your hard-earned dollar further? And can better use of the internet help fight inflation, too?

The answer to these questions is YES, and below, we present some of the best ways you can utilize WCTEL's fast internet to shop smartly and do more efficiently online in an era of higher prices.

1. Enjoy Online Entertainment at Home

The ever-increasing online entertainment options available with your fiber internet connection at home can significantly improve your overall budget.

For example, instead of taking your family out to the movies, consider hosting a family movie night at home. Today, many films can be streamed at home when they're released in theatres. And of course, there are already thousands of great movies and TV shows and specials you can enjoy.

Instead of paying for movie tickets and expensive concessions, warm up a bag of popcorn, grab a drink of your choice and settle in at home for a great film to stream. You'll save money on gas, the higher cost of individual tickets for each person, and the often egregiously marked-up price of cinema popcorn, soda, and other snacks.

2. Save on Groceries by Shopping Online

Today's shipping and logistics make shopping online for groceries convenient and efficient to deliver them to your home. And, if you're clever about it, grocery shopping online can provide considerable savings, too.

Purchasing groceries online for delivery saves you money on gas (i.e., fewer trips to the store throughout the week). Sam's Club and Costco offer their members free delivery for many of their

products—and buying in bulk adds to your savings! Amazon's Prime Pantry also provides a one-or-two-day delivery service for many groceries and staples.

If you need your groceries even faster, take advantage of your grocery store's app or website and purchase all your groceries online at home and then head to the store for pick-up. You can save even more money by doing curbside pick-up because you can avoid delivery fees and tips.

Using online grocery apps prevents "impulse buying" of products you had no intention of purchasing in the first place (and that you'll likely not even use). Be sure to also search the web for coupons, discounts, free trials, and other great deals on a host of groceries and other products.

3. Telehealth Appointments Are Convenient and Cost-Effective

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many families learned the value of telehealth appointments, where doctors and other health professionals provided vital health care services to individuals via online video conferences. According to some surveys, telehealth appointments can be considerably less expensive than in-person visits to the doctor—close to half as much.

Many insurance companies cover telehealth visits, as well. Of course, when in doubt, use your best judgment, as specific health issues could be acute and require in-person visits as soon as possible. But search around for telehealth options and enjoy the savings and conveniences of health care delivered online at your home.

4. Shop Online and Save on Open-Box and Refurbished Items

If you've shopped on Amazon, BestBuy.com, or most other large online stores, you'll undoubtedly have noticed recommended deals on open-box or refurbished items. Sometimes these are damaged products repaired by the manufacturer and then re-sold at a discount (often with a generous warranty). But often enough, retailers discount these items simply because their outer packaging is somewhat damaged.

Thus, you should consider open-box and refurbished products for sale. Both Amazon and Best Buy offer Warehouse and Outlet deals, respectively, and the savings can be huge—even over 60% off. Be sure to read the details provided about the open-box or refurbished item carefully before buying—but just using this one tip can save you hundreds of dollars a year.

5. Online Education and Classes Cuts Costs

If you're a student or considering college, technical school, vocational training, or taking extra classes to enrich your skills and marketability, money can be especially tight. The good news is that online education has expanded rapidly over the past several years, and for many individuals, higher education is within reach via the internet.

Many colleges and technical schools offer full degrees that you can complete entirely online from your home. Others provide popular courses that are well suited to an online format. In addition to the reduced costs of these internet-based programs and courses, enrolling in online

classes instead of needing to drive to campus each day can save you money on gas and put more money into the costs of your textbooks! So do your research and consider whether online education is the right fit for you.

When all or even most of these tips and strategies are employed, the savings add up. So yes, just by utilizing WCTEL's high-speed internet at home and being a savvier online consumer, you really can fight back against inflation!