

*Please note: This is a transcription so there may be slight grammatical errors.*

Drew Battle: If you are like many Americans, you may not be saving enough for retirement. In fact, nearly half of all US households have no retirement savings at all. But it's never too late to save, and there are some simple ways you can get started.

The first step is to understand why saving is important. Social Security and other government benefits probably won't pay enough to support you when you no longer have a regular income. That means you'll need to rely on your own savings and investments to make up the difference.

How can you begin? Here are a few ideas. Start small and try to be consistent. Even if you can only afford to save a small amount every month, that small amount is better than nothing, and will add up over time. If your employer offers a retirement plan, make sure you are enrolled, and if not, consider opening an individual retirement account, also called an IRA. Set up automatic contributions so you don't have to think about it. Over time, you can increase your contributions as your income grows. One idea is to increase your automatic contribution by 1% every year.

You should also look for ways to reduce your expenses. One of the easiest ways to find extra money for savings is to spend less now. Pay attention to your spending habits and look for areas where you can trim your budget by even a few dollars a month. For instance, cancel anything you're paying for but not using. Depending on your circumstances, you might also be able to increase your income by monetizing one of your hobbies like gardening, woodworking, crafting, baking, or officiating sports.

Another tactic that can help free up money for your retirement savings is to pay down debt. Over time, debt payments make it difficult to save, especially when you're also paying interest and fees. Focus on paying off one debt at a time. When that debt is gone, pick a new debt to focus on and continue the pattern. You could consider a yard sale or selling things online. Maybe you have a bike, a tablet, or an expensive kitchen gadget that you rarely use. Those things are all good candidates to sell and pay off your debt or add to your savings.

Remember, the key to successfully saving is to start early and keep going. The sooner you start, the more time your money will have to grow. If you're just beginning, it's okay to take tiny steps and build up over time. Remind yourself that these small changes can create a big impact, and your future self will thank you for the extra effort you put in. Along the way, CAPTRUST is here to help, so give us a call today.