

# Spreadsheet Budgeting & Personal Finance — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a real, working personal-finance spreadsheet. Each section maps to a course module and mixes hands-on exercises, fill-in worksheets, and checklists. Work through it with your own file open in Excel or Google Sheets, using your real numbers, and finish with the action plan and ready-to-use templates.

## Foundations: Structuring Money Data in a Spreadsheet

Set up a clean transaction table, a category system, and the spreadsheet habits that make every later formula work.

### Exercise: Choose Your Tool and Set the Rules

Commit to one spreadsheet tool and lock in the three foundational rules before entering any data.

- Which tool will you use for the whole course, Excel or Google Sheets, and why?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Write the three rules in your own words: one row per transaction, raw data separate from reports, and never type a number you could calculate.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What did you name your file, and which two tabs (Transactions, Budget) did you create?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Which sign convention are you adopting, positive amounts with a Type column or signed amounts?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Worksheet: Transaction Table Blueprint

Define each column of your Transactions sheet before you build it, then convert the range to a Table.

Column 1: Date (format used)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Column 2: Description (example value)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Column 3: Category (drives all reports)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Column 4: Subcategory (optional, example)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Column 5: Amount (currency format, convention)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Column 6: Type (Income / Expense)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Column 7: Account (e.g. Chequing, Credit Card)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Table name you assigned (e.g. tblTransactions)  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

## Worksheet: Category System Designer

List your 10 to 15 top-level categories and tag each as a Need, a Want, or Savings to sanity-check against 50/30/20.

Income source categories

---

Housing and Utilities categories

---

Food categories (Groceries vs Dining subcategories)

---

Transportation and Health categories

---

Debt Payments and Savings categories

---

Personal/Fun and Irregular/Other categories

---

Need / Want / Savings tag for each category

---

Rough current split (Needs % / Wants % / Savings %)

---

## Checklist: Module 1 Setup Complete

- One tool chosen and a clearly named file created
- Transactions sheet built with the seven headers
- Five real transactions entered to test the layout
- Range converted to a Table that auto-expands
- Lists sheet created with 10 to 15 categories tagged Need/Want/Savings
- Data-validation dropdowns applied to Category and Type

## The Formula Toolkit for Budgeting

Write the core formulas, SUMIFS, XLOOKUP, FILTER, and date functions, that power every report and dashboard.

### Exercise: Write Your First SUMIFS

Build the conditional sums that total spending by category and month, the engine of the whole budget.

- Write the SUMIFS that totals all Expense transactions for your largest category.

---

- Add month start and end date cells, then extend the SUMIFS to bound by date using the operator-and-cell pattern (" $\geq$ "&start).

---

- Change the month dates by one month: did every category total recalculate correctly?

---

- Write one COUNTIFS that counts how many times you ate out this month.

---

## Worksheet: Formula Reference Card

Record the exact formula you wrote for each pattern so you can reuse and adapt it later.

Category total (SUMIFS) formula

---

---

Month-bounded total (SUMIFS with dates) formula

---

---

Need/Want lookup (XLOOKUP) formula

---

---

If-not-found value you used (e.g. Uncategorized)

---

---

Live filtered list (FILTER) formula

---

---

Month key (TEXT date as yyyy-mm) formula

---

---

Current-month start/end (EOMONTH) formulas

---

### Exercise: Enrich and Slice Your Data

Use XLOOKUP and FILTER to classify transactions and build a self-updating view.

- Add a Need/Want helper column using XLOOKUP against your Lists sheet. Did any rows return Uncategorized (a typo to fix)?
  - Use SUMIFS on that helper to compute total Needs, Wants, and Savings. What is your real 50/30/20 split?
  - Write a FILTER that lists every expense over 100 dollars this month.
  - Add a transaction and confirm both the helper column and the FILTER view updated on their own.
- 

### Checklist: Formula Toolkit Working

- Category SUMIFS totals built on a Summary sheet
  - Month start/end cells wired into the criteria
  - Need/Want helper column added with XLOOKUP and a not-found value
  - Needs/Wants/Savings totals computed and compared to 50/30/20
  - At least one live FILTER view created
  - Month key helper column added with TEXT
- 

## Building the Budget and Cash-Flow Model

Assemble a zero-based monthly budget with variance tracking, a rolling cash-flow forecast, and a reconciliation habit.

### Worksheet: Zero-Based Budget Planner

Assign every dollar of expected income a job so total allocations minus income equals zero.  
Expected total income this month

---

---

Planned amounts per category (list them)

---

---

Sum of all planned allocations (should equal income)

---

---

Bottom-line cell value (target: zero)

---

---

Actual = SUMIFS formula confirmed for each category (yes/no)

---

Variance = Planned minus Actual formula added (yes/no)

---

Conditional formatting flags overspending in red (yes/no)

---

### Exercise: Build the Rolling Cash-Flow Forecast

Create a running-balance forecast that projects your account balance forward, then pressure-test it.

- What real current balance did you enter as the first Opening Balance?
  - Write the Closing Balance formula (Opening + Income - Expenses) and confirm each Opening links to the prior Closing.
  - Which recurring incomes and bills did you place in the forecast, and on which dates (use EDATE)?
  - What safety threshold did you set, and in which week (if any) does the Closing Balance dip below it?
- 

### Worksheet: Reconciliation Log

Match your spreadsheet to your real bank balance and record any gap so you can hunt down errors.  
Reconciliation date

---

Spreadsheet running-balance total

---

Real bank balance (from statement/app)

---

Difference (gap to investigate)

---

Likely cause if mismatched (duplicate / sign error / missing row)

---

Source of transactions (CSV import / manual entry)

---

### Checklist: Budget and Forecast Live

- Zero-based budget built with Planned, Actual, Variance columns
- Total allocations equal expected income (bottom line near zero)
- Overspending flagged red with conditional formatting
- Cash-flow forecast built with carry-forward Closing balances
- 12 future periods generated with EDATE
- Spreadsheet reconciled against the real bank balance

## Dashboards, Goals, and Scenario Planning

Build a one-screen dashboard, track debt payoff and savings goals, and stress-test decisions with scenarios.

### Exercise: Build the One-Screen Dashboard

Create a Dashboard tab with KPI cards and the four core charts, all driven by formulas.

- Which four KPI cards did you build (income, expenses, net, savings rate), and what does each currently read?

---

- Is your savings rate above the 20 percent healthy target? If not, by how much is it short?

---

- Which four charts did you add, and which one is most useful to you at a glance?

---

- What did you remove or simplify (gridlines, colors) to keep it readable on one screen?

### Worksheet: Debt and Savings Goal Tracker

Capture each debt and each savings goal with the numbers needed to model payoff and progress.

Debt 1: balance, annual rate, monthly payment

---

Payoff method chosen (avalanche vs snowball) and why

---

Extra payment amount and new payoff date

---

Goal 1: target amount, saved so far, deadline

---

Percent complete and required monthly contribution

---

Emergency fund target (essential expenses x 3 to 6)

### Exercise: Run Your Scenarios

Use assumption cells and what-if tools to stress-test the decisions and risks that matter to you.

- Job-loss runway: set income to zero, how many months stays your balance above your threshold?

---

- Large purchase: model an upcoming purchase, does the forecast survive it?

---

- Use Goal Seek to find the monthly payment that clears a debt in 24 months. What is it?

---

- Which named scenarios (Base, Optimistic, Job Loss) did you save to compare?

### Checklist: System Complete and Sustained

Dashboard tab with four KPI cards and four formula-driven charts

Amortization schedule built for at least one debt

Savings goals table with progress and required monthly contribution

Emergency fund set as the first tracked goal

At least one stress-test scenario (job loss or large purchase) run

A recurring monthly money date scheduled to run the full routine

## Your Action Plan

1. Pick one tool, Excel or Google Sheets, create a clearly named file, and add Transactions and Budget tabs today.
2. Build the seven-column transaction table, convert it to an auto-expanding Table, and enter your last statement.
3. Create a Lists sheet of 10 to 15 categories tagged Need/Want/Savings and lock them in with dropdowns.
4. Write SUMIFS category totals bounded by month, then add an XLOOKUP Need/Want helper column.
5. Build a zero-based budget with Planned, Actual, and Variance, and flag overspending in red.
6. Construct a rolling cash-flow forecast with carry-forward balances and a red low-balance warning.
7. Reconcile the spreadsheet against your real bank balance and fix any duplicates or sign errors.
8. Build a one-screen dashboard with four KPI cards and four charts driven entirely by formulas.
9. Set up an emergency-fund goal and an amortization schedule for your highest-priority debt.
10. Schedule a monthly money date to import, reconcile, review, roll forward, and run one scenario.











