

The Top 10 Financial Mistakes New Attendings Make

Don't Trip on
These First-
Year Money
Mistakes

You've worked too hard to let simple financial missteps slow you down. Here are the most common mistakes new attendings make—and how to avoid them.

1. Buying too much house too soon

That first big paycheck makes it tempting to buy your dream home right away. But a \$1M mortgage can leave you cash-poor and stressed. Start smaller until your income stabilizes and you've built an emergency fund.

2. Delaying disability insurance until after graduation

Residents who wait often lose 20–40% discounts available during training. Worse, if your health changes, you could be declined entirely. Locking in coverage early protects your income when it matters most.

3. Ignoring student loan repayment options

Federal programs like Income-Driven Repayment or Public Service Loan Forgiveness require careful setup. Choosing the wrong plan could cost you thousands in extra interest—or make you ineligible for forgiveness.

4. Not setting up an emergency fund

Life happens: car repairs, moving costs, unexpected medical bills. Without 3–6 months of expenses saved, even a short job gap can mean relying on credit cards with sky-high interest.

5. Overlooking retirement accounts (Roth IRA, 401(k))

The earlier you start, the more your money grows. Missing even one year of Roth IRA contributions can mean losing decades of tax-free growth—worth hundreds of thousands over your career.

6. Taking on lifestyle debt (cars, credit cards)

After years of sacrifice, it's natural to want nice things. But financing a \$1,200/month car or running up credit card balances delays loan payoff, savings, and financial freedom. Live below your means early.

7. Failing to read your employment contract

Buried terms can cost you big. Non-compete clauses might limit where you can practice. Bonus repayment clauses may require you to return money if you leave early. Always review with an expert before signing.

8. Skipping umbrella liability coverage


An extra \$1M of coverage costs only a few hundred dollars a year. Without it, a slip-and-fall at your house or a car accident could leave you personally responsible for hundreds of thousands.

9. Not planning for taxes on higher income

Jumping from \$60K to \$250K+ can create a massive tax bill if you don't adjust your withholdings. Many new doctors get caught off guard with a surprise \$15–20K owed their first year.

10. Putting off estate basics (beneficiaries, will, POA)

Even young doctors need basics in place. Updating beneficiaries, having a simple will, and setting up a power of attorney ensures your family avoids delays, expenses, and unnecessary stress if something happens.



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