**[3 Easy Ways to Pay Off Your Home Faster](http://blog.smartdollar.com/blog/2015/6/24/3-easy-ways-to-pay-off-your-home-faster)**

If nothing’s certain in life except death and taxes, a mortgage surely isn’t far behind—at least that’s the case for 70% of Americans, according to a recent study by Zillow.

But have you ever stopped to imagine what life would be like if your house was paid for and you didn’t have any mortgage payments?

**Here’s a little secret: It’s far from impossible.** Let’s explore three simple tricks for getting ’er done based on a $150,000, 30-year mortgage with a 4% interest rate.

**Divide and Conquer**

One easy way to shave years off your mortgage is to pay a little extra each month. Every dollar you add to your regular payment each month puts a bigger dent in your principal balance—and you don’t have to double down to make a difference. Adding just one extra payment each year **knocks four years and nearly $17,000 off** your mortgage.

Can’t do it in one big lump sum each year? No problem! Break it down into smaller chunks using one of these two options:

* Divide your payment by 12 and add that amount to your monthly payment. In this case, we’d add an extra $60 to our regular $716 monthly payment, bringing the total up to $776.
* Pay half of your payment every two weeks—also known as bi-weekly payments—instead of a single payment once a month. That gives you 13 payments a year instead of 12. For a $716 monthly payment, that would mean $358 every two weeks.

Throw in an Extra Andrew Jackson

If $60 a month puts too much crunch in your budget, never fear—your favorite former president is here! Put Andrew Jackson to work for you by adding $20 to your mortgage payment each month.

Sounds easy, right? That’s because it is! Even better, **you’ll pay your mortgage off a year and a half early**, saving over $6,200 in the process. It may not seem like a huge win, but that’s 18 extra months of saving, spending, or investing that money however you want!

**Unleash the Power of the Brown Bag**

What if we told you that bringing your own lunch to work could save you $45,000?

If that doesn’t get you excited, consider this: Trading lunch out for eating in can make you a lean, mean, mortgage-free machine **11 and a half years ahead of schedule**. From now on, your bologna has a new name. It’s M-O-N-E-Y!

*Related:* [*7 Things Americans Waste Money On*](http://blog.smartdollar.com/blog/2015/5/5/7-things-americans-waste-money-on)

**A Word (or Three) of Caution**

Before you start making extra payments, let’s go over the ground rules.

1. Check with your mortgage company first. Some companies only accept extra payments at specific times or may charge prepayment penalties.

2. Make sure additional payments are applied to the principal and not to the following month’s mortgage.

3. Don’t shell out your hard-earned cash for a mortgage accelerator program. You can accomplish the same goal all by yourself, thank you very much!

If you follow these three steps, you'll be celebrating your paid off home in no time!