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The holiday shopping season is over now, and many Americans are seeing the impact on their credit card bills and bank statements. During the holidays, people often make a lot of large purchases, and sometimes max out their cards in order to do so. In a nationally representative survey conducted by WalletHub, 34 percent of respondents say they worry about maxing out their card with a large purchase.

[This article first appeared on [WalletHub.com](https://www.wallethub.com).]

That's certainly a legitimate concern, considering Americans' tendency to rack up credit card debt. After all, we hit [over \\$1 trillion](#) in total credit card debt for the first time ever in 2018. And while people with high incomes and stable employment may have no trouble putting large purchases on a credit card, reaping rewards, and paying them off quickly, it's a different story for Americans with less stable incomes. When it comes to non-essential large purchases, they may be better off saving up and paying in cash. "If they don't pay bills monthly and carry a balance with a high interest rate, relying on cash is a good discipline," says David Laibson, a professor of economics at Harvard University.

Below are some more of highlights of WalletHub's survey, along with additional insight from a panel of experts.

Key Stats

- **Men max out more.** Women are 15 percent less likely than men to have maxed out a card once. On top of that, they're 9 percent less likely to have done so more than once.

- **Age shapes our definition of “large.”** People aged 18 to 29 are more than twice as

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Use credit cards for large purchases.

- **No max-out worries for retirees.** Retirees are 21 percent more likely than full-time workers to use credit cards for large purchases. Retirees are also 75 percent less likely to worry about maxing out their cards.

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