

Seven Checklists To Help You Shop Smarter

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Give your credit card a break and discover how fun it can be to buy a couple of items with a \$20 bill; wear your smile, and walk confidently with a positive attitude! Don't mistake cheap with value, you want good quality items that fit and will last a few seasons.

1. **Buy better clothing.** It sounds crazy, but in reality you get more value – or cost per wear – out of decent clothes that actually fit you versus the “fast food” approach to your wardrobe.
2. **Question yourself and be smart.** This can save you hundreds of dollars in a few ways. Firstly, buying off-season lands you better deals and so does buying on sale. Sale items, however, can be tricky because there's always the possibility of it going down further in price in weeks to come. Second, take the time to ask yourself, “Should I buy this item?” It happens to all of us, you see something and it's just so tempting! Before you purchase it, ask yourself if it goes with a *minimum* of three outfits already in your wardrobe. If not, put it back. Not only will you spend more money to build an outfit around said piece, or you will be betraying the “meat and potatoes” rule. The rule states 70 per cent of your clothes should be essentials, aka have the ability to be worn every day.
3. **Don't wash your clothes as often.** It sounds bad, not to mention smelly, but this will actually help your clothes last longer and save you on utilities – double score! You'll end up replacing your clothes less often if you can remember that sturdier clothes can be worn a few times and aired out before needing to be washed. Vacuum and canvas storage containers, mothballs, and cedar blocks are examples of ways you can protect the clothes you love. Always read the labels and listen when it says, “hand wash only” and “dry clean only,” and know how to wash and fold properly to avoid harming the fabrics.
4. **Go vintage.** It's always in fashion and brand names can be found if you know where to look – not to mention second-hand clothing is super comfortable! Flea markets are just one example of where you can find a variety of unique and second-hand treasures, most times you'll even be able to bargain for an even better price!
5. **Get creative with what you have.** A scarf can be tied 25 ways, a tie over 100, look to fashion for inspiration to make the most of what you have. Take ideas from things like old movies, and think about organizing a Closet Party with your friends! This entails you each to go through your closet and compile a collection of gently-used items you haven't worn in the past year, this can range from belts to purses, down to that dress you've worn to three weddings already. When you all come together, swap'n'trade amongst yourselves – just remember not to take more than you give!

6. **Tailor clothes to fit you.** It can still be of use even if it's too big or just not quite right. Take the time to take it to a tailor versus buying new items. Not only does it come out cheaper but also it will look better on you than a default size. With this in mind, you can also get a quality pair of second-hand shoes repaired for cheaper than buying a brand new pair. Browse those clearance racks as well, you can always have something that is one size too big or one size too small tailored to fit you, depending on the garment and fabric.
7. **Buy clothes that suit YOU the best.** It sounds silly, but if you do this you won't need to buy clothes to replace ones that don't work for you. With so many options it's easy to accumulate a mismatched wardrobe you don't end up wearing. The key is to keep a closet full of clothes that match and focus on the essentials.

Be aware of what's influencing you and your purchases. Remember that not everything we want is necessarily a good investment and this will help to make your shopping a rewarding experience versus a maddening one!