



Quick Tips

For Stress-Free Holiday Shopping

When you think of the elbowing crowds, the overflowing parking lots and the monstrous credit card bills, holiday shopping can seem overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be. Follow these tips to stay stress-free while you buy gifts for your loved ones:

Start your shopping early and beat the crowds. Don't let the holidays sneak up on you. Try to start your shopping as soon as possible so you can spread out the expense and not spend so much time standing in jam-packed holiday lines.

Have your family create online wish lists. You can get them exactly what they want and never have to arm-wrestle over a trendy new doll.

Make your list (and check it twice). Take a tip from Santa and have a list of gifts you want to buy before you head out to shop. This can help you avoid impulse buys and stay on budget.

Take a break while shopping. Treat yourself to a seasonal coffee, a chair massage or a pedicure during your shopping trip.

Set a realistic spending limit and stick to it. Avoid going into debt for the sake of generosity. You can look at gift prices online to see what you can realistically expect to spend. Consider thoughtful handmade gifts to save money.

Use the mall gift-wrapping service. Save yourself the time and headache of wrapping gifts. Sometimes these services are staffed by local schools or scouting groups, so your gift-wrapping money may even benefit a good cause.

To help keep stress at bay during the holidays or at any time throughout the year, reach out for confidential [non-medical counseling](#) by visiting [Military OneSource](#) or by calling 800-342-9647.

