



## Ready for Black Friday? 5 Tips for Holiday Shoppers.

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It turns out Hollywood celebrities look forward to Black Friday shopping just as much as the rest of us, though their shopping lists of furniture, shoes, and the latest Tesla may be a bit different than ours. For the rest of us, the day after Thanksgiving is an opportunity to find some steep discounts just before the giving season starts in earnest.

And since we know what the Black Friday shopping frenzy can entail, here are five pointers to help you navigate the clearance aisle crowds:

### 1. Make a budget

In 2014, the average Black Friday shopper spent about \$381. The year before, it was well over \$400. Spending hundreds of dollars on new clothes and gadgets can leave a serious dent in your savings, so set a maximum amount based on your income. A good rule of thumb is using no more than 1.5 percent of your earnings—\$750 if you make \$50,000 a year, for instance—on

holiday shopping. Don't let one day set your bank account back three months—or longer.

### 2. Do your research ahead of time

There are several resources you can use to compare prices and find the best deals. TGIBlackFriday.com and RetailMeNot.com, for example, aggregate all Black Friday discounts by category, retailer, and date. ShopSavvy.com is another good one. And, if you don't have extra time beforehand, all of these helpers come in mobile form. Download the app and find the lowest price!

### 3. Wake up early

According to the National Retail Federation, nearly 136 million Americans plan to shop on Thanksgiving weekend. In 2012, the turnout was about 147 million. So be ready for a stampede. You can ditch some of the crowds if you get up early—say, 6 am—and get everything done before breakfast. Plus, you won't have to worry about your favorite items selling out. Getting up late means longer lines and slimmer pickings.

### 4. Shop from home

If holiday crowds scare you, it might be best to shop online. You're not necessarily missing out: 70% of Black Friday deals are available, at least briefly, on store websites. And many stores offer free standard shipping through Christmas (with no minimum purchase amount). You can take advantage of doorbusters without ever leaving your front door.

### 5. Know the Black Friday economics

Some say it's called "Black Friday" because many stores go from being in the red to the black for the year. In other words, they're making money off you—even if all you notice is "For Sale." Major retailers lure shoppers to higher-margin stuff with smart floor designs, placing more expensive items at eye-level and forcing you to walk around displays to draw your attention. Keep that in mind so you can keep impulse spending in check and avoid buyer's remorse.