
THE RULES

SHOP SMART!

“Shopping”... Cringe, sigh, groan... The ultimate frontier for most men! However, hate it as they might, in a study conducted at Brunel University, researchers found that men are more effective at picking a bargain. They spend less time browsing and have a far clearer idea of what they want. Unlike men however, many women tend to overspend and then go on endless guilt trips. Only to find solace in the next shopping arcade. And thus the vicious cycle continues...

Explains Seema Hingorrany, clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, “Sometimes women go overboard and don’t think before they shop. Often, a sweet talking salesman carries them away, even if they don’t want something.”

Here are some handy tips to arm you before you head for your next shopping spree...

Stick to your budget

Your purse is not a bottomless treasure trove. The sooner you realise it, the better. You should keep a fair margin over and above the amount you want to spend, to take care of unexpected shopping encounters. And yes, stick to that margin!

Control those impulses

Do you really need to buy that ‘Oh-so-gorgeous’ top which would look ‘absolutely perfect’ with almost anything you own? Take a reality check and visually tour your wardrobe where you’ll discover (surprise surprise!!) four tops that are exactly the same. Says Shanta Nayak, HR professional, “I often end up buying things I already have. Some may have slight variations but it’s quite easy to repeat yourself!”

Swipes aren’t so magical

Credit and debit cards, though a heaven sent, are not mediums to unlimited shopping binges. ‘Plastic’ goes a long way but smart shoppers advise that you should make purchases in cash. That way you can curb your buying. Even if you use your card, you must remember that just because you’re not parting with tangible crispy notes, doesn’t mean it will pinch any less when the bill finally arrives.

Take your time

Before you indulge in something, take your time and inspect it properly. When it

comes to clothes, check the quality of fabric, stitching and care instructions. For electronics, you’d be wise to do a little groundwork, and find out about the product beforehand. Networking comes in handy here. Read up consumer reviews and ask around before making big decisions.

Don’t shop as entertainment

Don’t shop if you’re bored. Says Hingorrany, “Sometimes housewives who are idle and bored, go out and spend a lot. People who are depressed also indulge in shopping trips as a method of escapism.” Also, if you’re accompanying a friend who wants to buy something, it doesn’t mean the Gods of shopping expect you to pay obeisance and succumb to pure desire!

Sales shop

Most stores have sales and you'd do well to enquire when the next sale is on. Ask the salesperson or keep track of advertisements. Though a word of caution here — many women hold back during regular shopping seasons and go completely berserk during sales, thinking everything is so much lesser!

When in doubt, wait a while

There comes a time in every shopper's life where she is not sure about whether she wants to spend the bucks or not. Ask any guy and he'll tell you a woman's indecisiveness can be most irritating. If you're not sure about something, think over it and then make a decision. Haste gets you nowhere!

