

Tips for Saving on Clothing

By Amy Maliga

Take Charge America (www.takechargeamerica.org)

Whether you're shopping only for yourself or outfitting a whole family, shopping for clothing can take a big bite out of your budget. It doesn't have to, though. With a few smart shopping tips and tricks (and some that involve no shopping at all), you can shrink your fall clothing budget and still leave the house looking like a million bucks.

Shop Your Closet

Rather than heading to the mall, go shopping in your own closet. Set aside a weekend afternoon to go through your entire wardrobe. Evaluate what to keep and what you're going to swap or donate. After that, start creating outfits by putting your favorites together in new ways. You'll be surprised at the combinations you can create when you stretch your clothing comfort zone. If it seems like too big a job to tackle alone, ask a friend whose opinion you trust to help – then return the favor for them.

Beware of Fast Fashion

Many clothing chains now specialize in what's known as '[fast fashion](#),' which means they quickly replicate trendy or runway looks and offer them at really low price points. Unfortunately, the quality of these garments is often very low also. So, while buying a \$9 sweater or a \$12 pair of jeans seem like a bargain, it won't feel that way when the fabric looks pilled after the first wearing or the seams come apart after one wash. You're better off paying more for higher quality items that have a longer shelf life – purchased only on sale, of course.

Arrange a Clothing Swap

Clothing swaps are becoming a popular option for refreshing wardrobes, and with good reason, you get to spend a few hours with friends and make over your wardrobe for next to nothing. It works like this: you get a group of friends together, everyone brings clothing and accessories they no longer wear and you shop and trade each other's items. Clothing swaps are a great option for kids' clothes, too. Read more about hosting a fun and easy clothing swap [here](#).

Know When to Buy

Buying clothing on clearance at the end of the season and stashing it away to wear next year is one tried and true way to save. But did you know which day of the week you shop can affect how much you spend? For example, you'll save more on men's clothing if you shop for it on Tuesdays, while Thursdays are the right day to shop for handbags. You can see a full rundown of optimal shopping days [here](#).

Care for it Correctly

No matter how much you spend initially, taking good care of your clothing will help it last longer and look better. Always read and follow the [instructions on the care label](#). In fact, check the care label before you buy a garment to be sure you have the time and resources to care for it properly. Instructions such as 'dry clean only' or 'hand wash' mean a garment may take a little more maintenance to stay looking its best. Factor the cost of this special care into the total price before making a buying decision.

