

Surviving Mall Madness

1. Shop early and during off hours.
 - Mondays and Tuesdays are the least crowded shopping days.
 - Early morning and lunch-hour shopping is also less crowded.
2. Shop according to your shipping needs.
 - First buy gifts that need to be wrapped and shipped, then concentrate on gifts to be delivered in town, and finally for family gifts.
 - Think small when buying gifts that need to be shipped. Even items purchased on sale can become quite expensive when you add packing and shipping.
3. Take back roads and park as far away from the main entrances as you can. Make a note of where you parked your car so you can find it easily.
4. Shop early when parking lots are less crowded. Or take advantage of valet parking, or have a friend drive you to your destination and pick you up when you are done.
5. Set a budget for yourself before you shop, and stick to it.
6. Bring a list of who you need to buy for and their wish lists. Bring a list of everyone's ages, sizes, and preferences. Be patient, and know that you will find a gift for everyone on your list.
7. Bring a snack, and bring along your water bottle or take advantage of water fountains when possible. Dehydration can make you feel tired long before the day is over.
8. Wear the most comfortable shoes and clothes you have, and carry a small purse or money belt that is easy to get to. Wear a light coat or leave your coat in the car.
9. Take breaks. Short breaks in a chair or on a bench can help revive tired feet.
10. Keep receipts so that any returns or replacements can be made easily and accurately.
11. Avoid malls and big shopping centers. Out-of-the-way stores are usually crowd-free.
12. Consider shopping online or from catalogs. Be sure to check out return, shipping, and delivery policies.