

Couponsing Basics

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To Coupon or Not to Coupon?

Keep these things in mind:

- If it's something you'll never use, it's not a bargain even if it's FREE.
- Your time is valuable. If you're spending more than an hour a week searching for, clipping, and organizing your coupons, you're wasting it.
- Keep track of your spending. Is couponing really saving you as much money as you hoped?

Top Tips

- Take advantage of store sales. Everything in the store goes on sale every 8-12 weeks, so buy accordingly.
- Running all over town from store to store is a waste of both time and money (gas). Stick to one or two stores.
- Become familiar with your store's coupon policy: Do they double? Do they honor competitors' coupons? Do they issue rain checks?
- You can use one manufacturer's and one store coupon for the same item, but NOT two manufacturer's coupons or two store coupons.
- Stockpiling certain items when they're on sale can save money, but don't overdo it!
(See "Stockpiling Sense" for more.)

Stockpiling Sense

Bulk buying only saves money if the products you're buying are things you'll use. Here are some handy pointers:

- To begin a stockpile, you'll need multiple coupons. Four of each coupon is a good start. Buy multiple Sunday papers, exchange coupons with friends and family, or look online. (See "Web Gems" for more.)
- Non-perishable items work best for stockpiling. Wait until they're on sale, then buy as many as you have coupons for, keeping in mind store or manufacturer's restrictions.
- Again, buy only what you'll use and what your family likes or it's a waste of money.
- Keep an eye on expiration dates. Toilet paper may not expire, but canned goods do. Follow the "First In, First Out" rule: Store items with earlier expiration dates in front of those with later dates.
Tip: Stores follow this rule, too. Buy the items in the back if you want later expiration dates.
- Don't go overboard. Items will go on sale again, so it's not necessary to have 5,000 rolls of paper towels on hand.
- Donate! Bulk buying can help others, too.

Source: www.couponing101.com

Organize Yourself

Serious couponing means having serious quantities of coupons on hand. Starting a coupon binder can help you keep things straight.

Start with a sturdy binder with inside and outside pockets, then file your coupons by category (or alphabetically), storing them in plastic trading card sheets.

Web Gems

Manufacturer's coupons:

- www.coupons.com
- www.mycoupons.com
- www.couponcabin.com
- www.grocerycoupons.com

Store coupons:

- www.publix.com
- www.sweetbaysupermarket.com
- www.winndixie.com
- www.walmart.com
- www.target.com