

6 Hacks to Keep Your Spending on Track at Target

Target run and drop \$100? No more! Our best tips to keep you from over-spending.

By **Caroline Mullen**



PHOTO: PHOTO BY ALYCE JONES

Ah, Target. Everyone's favorite black hole. Walk in looking for 2% milk, and walk out with a fringed throw pillow, a pair of sunglasses, a floral-scented hand soap, and \$100 worth of other items, because...how could you not? Short of putting on blinders upon walking in, it's pretty difficult to curb Target spending instincts. However, we've gathered some tips to keep you on track and out of your savings to cover a Saturday morning Target run.

Get the Cartwheel app.

First things first: whether you're a Target junkie or just a Bullseye beginner, you **MUST** download the Cartwheel app. It's the secret to saving money and making

your trip easier, scout's honor. Just some of the things the app does:

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- Browse weekly Cartwheel deals on the app (including coupons you can only access with the app), and scan barcodes while shopping to add the offers. Stock the fam up on toilet paper the week it goes on sale, and they'll be thankful for the 4-ply.
- Make shopping lists on the app, and each item will be categorized by aisle so you're not booking it back across the store when you forgot asparagus.
- Before you put pants on for no reason, search for specific items to see if they're in stock at your local Target. No Pillsbury sugar cookies with seasonal characters on them? Stay in your PJs.
- Order ahead for drive up or in-store pickup. You literally do not have to leave your car in order to get all your Target essentials, they'll bring it out to you a la Applebee's carside to go. The future is now.

Shop the clearance sections.

If you're walking into Target with no real focus and just to browse, we'd like to be the first to say: good luck. Secondly: browse the endcaps first. Most of the clearance endcaps face the store walls, i.e. not the ones that face the large walkway aisles. There's a veritable treasure trove of out of season candles, one-off beauty products, and office supplies waiting to be pillaged. If you're in the mood for some simple retail therapy, the endcaps are your BFF.

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Find the bargain buys.

The next place to check is "Bullseye's Playground," the \$1 to \$5 section of the cutest things you never knew you needed. This area is a one-stop shop for seasonal kitsch, quick gift items, and stuff that makes you go, "AWW!" Even if you're at Target for a knock-down, drag-out grocery haul, a pack of inspirational

pencils or a rustic wooden sign under \$5 makes you feel like you treated yourself, without guilt.

Do some post-holiday shopping.

Go wild with the seasonal clearance. Oh yes, we mean the BEST little detailed gift bags and tassel-y bows post-Christmas. Pop over to Target between Christmas and New Year's Day to stockpile the glitter and burlap provisions you'll need for next year's holiday. Not only that, but stockings, ornaments, yard lights, and more are all up to 90% off. It's nuts, and so are you if you don't check it out.

Watch for free gift cards with purchase.

Keep an eye out (on the cartwheel app and in the store) for Target's gift card deals. Promotions might be something like: "Free \$20 gift card with baby department purchase of \$100 or more." So yeah, you've got to spend a little to get a little, but if you're dropping that much on your own kid's diapers or a baby shower gift already, that \$20 gift card is free money, baby.

Save your receipts.

There are several reasons for this: first being, it's far easier to get your money back for anything (without pulling the "can I speak to your manager?" card) with a receipt, but you knew that. Second, Target has a one-year satisfaction guarantee on their in-house brands (like Threshold, Market Pantry, Archer Farms, Cat & Jack, etc.) so if you bring it back with a receipt within the year, you get a full refund. Third, Target will price match any item within 14 days if you find one of their competitors is selling it for less. Cha-ching.

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