



Top 5 ways to...

# Stress-free Christmas shopping

Get gift ideas from Pinterest

With Christmas just weeks away, take on our tips for gift buying without the headache, writes LAURA GREAVES

**T**his is the season to be jolly, but if the prospect of shopping for gifts fills you with dread, you're not alone. A recent survey by shopping website Getprice (getprice.com.au) found a third of shoppers admit delaying their Christmas purchases until the last minute, and battling for parking spots and queues are the things most likely to quash our festive spirit. The good news is, with some planning, this year's Christmas shopping might just bring peace on Earth.

## 1 FUEL UP

Armed with your gift list and budget, it's time to hit the shops. Ensure you have eaten prior to going and take food and water with you.

"If you have low blood sugar and are dehydrated, this can increase stress and anxiety," says psychologist Kellee Waters (fitmindsandbodies.com).

And if the crowds become too much, "the most important thing is to breathe slowly and tell yourself to relax over and over until you calm down".



## 2 TAKE THE WEB WITH YOU

The web can be your secret weapon even at the shops.

The Westfield Gift Finder is an online program that allows you to browse more than 12,000 products according to personality, category and budget – perfect for compiling your gift list. Go to [westfield.com.au/au/gifts](http://westfield.com.au/au/gifts)



Westfield also has a free app for smartphones that offers centre maps, delivers special offers to your phone and allows you to browse current offers. Go to iTunes.

## 3 SAFE STORAGE

Don't let your carefully chosen gifts be discovered by prying eyes.

"Wrap presents as soon as you get them home. That way you won't run out of paper, gift tags or bows at the last minute – or have a present 'spotted'," says Rebecca. "Pair up with a friend and store your presents at their house, and vice-versa."

## 4 PLAN, PLAN, PLAN

Planning is essential for minimising shopping stress.

"As early as you can, start a file of ideas for gifts for family and friends," says professional organiser Rebecca Mezzino (clearspace.net.au). "When you hear them mention something they'd like, add it to the file. Keep sections of catalogues you can use to decide what to buy, to save browsing time."

Still stuck for ideas? Sign up to Pinterest (pinterest.com), a forum where people scrapbook their favourite things. Then browse like-minded users' posts for gift inspiration.

## 5 TIME IS ON YOUR SIDE

Even if you have left your shopping to the last moment, it's still possible to avoid the crowds.

"Make the most of extended Christmas shopping hours and shop later in the evening," suggests Westfield 'Shopping Insider' Alyce Cowell. "Many centres are open round the clock in the 36 hours leading up to Christmas Eve."

Call your centre to find out what other shopper-friendly services they offer, such as valet parking and giftwrapping.

