



GREAT WAYS TO SAVE: ONLINE SHOPPING

BY BETH BRAVERMAN

Online retailers are increasingly using data-powered dynamic pricing to adjust their prices, so it's up to shoppers to ensure they're getting the lowest ones possible. Here are some steps you can use to beat the algorithms:

Hide your browser history. Retailers may bump up prices on items that you visit frequently, or they'll do so if they can see you have recently shopped for similar merchandise. You can conceal such information from them by logging out of any retail accounts, browsing in incognito mode and frequently clearing your browser's cookies, says Julie Ramhold, senior editor at the daily deals website DealNews.

Shop on Mondays. Many retailers tend to lower prices the most at the start of the week, with an average price drop of more than 21 percent among retailers repricing on a Monday, according to online data platform Decodo. The average discount by

those retailers over the weekend, by comparison, is a little more than 8 percent.

Always check price history.

CamelCamelCamel can show you how the price of a product on Amazon compares with its price over the past few months. Tools like Honey and Google Shopping can do the same for other merchants. "There's a misconception that if it's on sale, that's the best price," says Stephanie Carls, a retail analyst at coupon and cash-back offers website RetailMeNot.

Set up sale alerts. If you're willing to wait for a better price for an item, you can use tools like Keepa, Karma and Slickdeals to keep an eye on it. "They will alert you when they detect a price drop, and then you can get a better deal when you buy," says budget consultant Andrea Woroch. In addition, sign up for retail newsletters and follow brands on social media to learn about site-wide promotional events.

Ask for price adjustments. Consider keeping those sale alerts running even after you make a purchase. Many large retailers, including Home Depot, Kohl's and Costco, will refund you the difference in what you spent if an item you ordered from their online site goes on sale at the same retailer

for up to a month after your transaction. The rules vary by retailer and may exclude certain holiday sales. Check the customer service page on a retailer's website for instructions on how to submit a claim.

Do the math on shipping. More than half of consumers prioritize free shipping over finding the best prices, and more than 8 in 10 said they would likely increase their spending to meet a retailer's free shipping threshold, according to a FedEx survey in 2024. Before you start adding items to your cart, check around to see if you can find the same product elsewhere for less including the shipping.

Take your time. Retailers have a variety of ways to encourage shoppers to make impulse purchases—and pay less attention to the price. One key tactic is to ratchet up a sense of urgency to the listing. That's why it has become increasingly common to see retailers claiming that "there are only two left" of an item or putting countdown timers on deals. Don't fall for it. "Those are just marketing tactics," says Dipin Porwal, founder and CEO of shopping rewards tool Smarty. ■

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