



oh amy, dear's savings guide

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oad! : Top blog pick/tip

getting started

coupon supplies

Most of what you will need to start couponing you should have lying around your home. To follow this guide, organize the following supplies for yourself:

- ◆ Computer with internet access
- ◆ Printer and printing paper
- ◆ High-quality paper scissors
- ◆ Something to collect your coupons in (an [accordion file](#) or [binder/box](#) with [inserts](#) or tabs)

savings blogs

Be sure to read and follow high-quality savings blogs. There are many savings blogs out there, but not all are created equal! Sign up for the daily newsletters from each of these blogs:

- ◆ **oad!** **Krazy Coupon Lady**—The best matchups on the web, plus a “brag page and great savings tips. [Website](#) | [Facebook](#)
- ◆ **Hip2Save**—A ton of content and a nationally known blog. [Website](#) | [Facebook](#)

coupon organization

Most couponers use an accordion file, binder, or rectangular box to organize their coupons in. You can organize your coupons in a few ways:

- ◆ **oad!** **Alphabetical**—Probably the simplest way to organize, you just put them in tabs in your file according to their brand, product name, or function. Put them in order based on what makes sense to you. I have things like Advil or Aleve under A, but all meats I have under M. I keep Bisquick under B, but all soaps (regardless of type or brand) I keep under S.
- ◆ **Store Category**—Similar to alphabetical organizing, sorting by store category (where you would find a

product in a store) will still be *in* alphabetical order, but within those, many different products may be represented. Examples of category organizing would be: Baby Care, Condiments, Deli, Frozen, Meat, Paper, Pet Care.

- ◆ **Stores**—Sometimes you have store coupons that you want to keep separate from manufacturer coupons. Keep them in the front of your organizer or all paper-clipped together. Pair this method with the ABC/Category method to keep your organizer in tip-top shape!

SAVINGS TIP

Choose the organizing system that works best for you—you're the one who has to follow it!

cutting coupons

coupon databases

These databases keep a record of all coupons available to the general public currently, whether printable, store, digital, or from inserts.

- ♦ **oad!** [Deal Seeking Mom](#)—Search all types of coupons in one database with advanced search.
- ♦ [Krazy Coupon Lady](#)—Easy links to all printable coupons, tabs for other coupon types.
- ♦ **oad!** [Coupon Connection's Current Catalinas](#)—Store by store view of catalina print offers.

coupon sources

Be sure to check all of the following sources to maximize your savings (some sites require registration):

- ♦ **oad!** Store/rewards card websites

- ♦ **oad!** Sunday Newspaper Inserts
- ♦ **oad!** Your favorite brand's website (i.e. [Advil](#), [Pillsbury](#), [Campbells](#), [Dove](#)) or their Contact page
- ♦ **oad!** [Coupons.com](#)—Top source for coupons
- ♦ [Smartsources.com](#)—Another top source, will often feature different brands than Coupons.com
- ♦ [Save.com](#)—Formerly Red Plum
- ♦ [Pick Up the Values](#)—Affiliated with Kimberley-Clark
- ♦ [Common Kindness](#)—Features alternative brands
- ♦ **oad!** [Healthy Essentials](#)—Affiliated with Johnson & Johnson
- ♦ [Box Tops 4 Education](#)—Affiliated with General Mills
- ♦ [EverydaySaver](#)—Affiliated with Betty Crocker and Pillsbury
- ♦ **oad!** [PG Everyday](#)—Affiliated with Proctor&Gamble
- ♦ [All You Coupons](#)—Will have similar coupons as Coupons.com, but with some additional exclusives

making your shopping list

While most of your shopping list may be dictated by what you and your family need, you can ensure getting the best deals and any hidden deals or money makers by going through a few steps first. After awhile, these will come second nature to you!

1. **Write down everything you need.** While writing your list, make notes on items you know have sale prices or coupons that will work.
2. **Log in to the website for your store and add coupons to your savings card.** Pay attention to what coupons or deals you add, because they may be digital MCs, meaning you likely will not be able to stack (or double-dip) a paper coupon from your organizer. My favorite store e-coupons are the ones that make a product a specified price or take a percentage off. Stack away on those!
3. **Go to your favorite savings blog and check out their store matchup section.** With knowledge of what you need, what coupons you have, and what store deals are available, you can now let the blogosphere do your work for you and *tell* you what deals you can score.
4. **Check out the store weekly ad.** While this could be seen as a repetitive step after step 3, this is necessary because you never know what you may find in your ad. If your local store is running a different special than others, or if there are special coupons you need (like the Safeway Double'r), you will be happy you checked!
5. **Organize your list and coupons together.** I find it easiest to go to the store with everything paperclipped together. It makes for a much more efficient trip and check out!

coupon to-dos

The following is a helpful checklist of OAD best practices for couponing success. You may choose to do a few or all of these — whatever works for you and your family!

once

- Sign up for savings newsletters
- Download and register for the Ibotta app
- Register on your favorite coupon websites
- Like your favorite coupon pages on Facebook

daily

- Read savings newsletters in your email inbox
- Check Facebook posts from coupon websites

weekly

- Check out the ad for your local stores and the savings blog store matchups
- Buy Sunday newspaper (*oad!* *Tip: Buy multiple copies to get more duplicate inserts.*)
- Check, print, and cut coupons from various coupon sources

bi-weekly

- Clean out your expired coupons

monthly

- Send expired coupons to military collection centers or an adopted military base

couponing realities

While couponing has its benefits, not all store trips are a walk in the park, and you will run into frustrations. Here are a few to prepare for and what to do to keep yourself sane:

1. **All the Sunday papers are sold out.** Be sure to buy your paper early on Sundays, or find the Saturday Early Edition—it often includes the coupon inserts from the coming Sunday!
2. **The checker and/or manager will not take your coupon.** Print out your store's coupon policy and take it with you. Kindly show them why you should be able to make X purchase because of their policy. If they still won't allow it—do not panic! It's usually managers' discretion on questionable coupons, and the nicer you are, the more likely they will be lenient in the future. And you leave the store a smarter couponer.
3. **The shelf is cleared.** Some early bird couponers will take all the product they can get. Combat this in two ways: (1) if you are concerned about quantity, either be at the store at opening or pre-order from the manager, and (2) make a deposit to the karma bank and do not ever do this yourself.
4. **Your friends/family make fun of you for couponing.** This is truly the most ridiculous, but unfortunately very common, reality. Bragging about your savings and/or showing them what you're able to do with the money you've saved should shut them up. And if not—just remember that you're providing for your family!
5. **It takes time and effort.** Well of course it does! Nothing worth having came easily, right? But think of your savings as the wage you pay yourself for the time you put in cutting and finding matchups.

coupon glossary

coupon

An awesome form of savings, usually comes in two different types: store (SC) and manufacturer (MC); can be found in newspaper inserts, in magazines, and printable from savings and company websites.

catalina

Coupon that prints out in store after a specified purchase; look for a gray box next to the normal receipt printer

ibotta

An app for your phone that enables you to save even more on certain items by uploading your receipt and scanning the product barcode

insert(s)

Packets of coupons found in newspapers and, in some regions, a weekly ad drop in your mailbox; common inserts are Red Plum, Smartsource, and P&G; included coupons will vary by region

matchup

A suggested purchase description, including a sale price, SC/store deal, and/or an MC; savings blogs are the best place to find these and cut down on the work you do each week

mail in rebate (mir)

Mail in rebate; can be found in inserts, in store, and on products themselves, among other places

money maker (mm)

A product that, by a combination of sales, SCs, MCs, and/or other deals (like MIRs), ends in a negative balance and making you money!

shopmium

An app for your phone that enables you to save even more on certain items by uploading your receipt and scanning the product barcode; takes longer to approve than Ibotta

stacking

(See Double Dip) Using a store coupon and a manufacturer coupon on the same item

did I miss something?

Email any questions or suggestions to ohamydear.blog@gmail.com.

check out more savings tips at ohamydear.com!