

UNDER\$PENT

10 top tips to survive buying nothing new month

This October is Buy Nothing New Month, a global movement for collective, conscientious consumption. It's a one month challenge to buy nothing new (with the exception of essentials like food, hygiene and medicines).

Earlier this year, I interviewed hundreds of men and women in Australia, UK and USA about their shopping addictions and buying habits. They told me that their biggest fear about quitting shopping, buying and spending was making do with what they already own. Many men and women told me about how they have a 3 or 4 bedroom house and garage packed full of 'stuff' but that they thought their stuff wasn't good enough or new enough.

I didn't buy anything new or 2nd hand during 2014. I made do with what I already had and I saved a staggering 38% of my take-home salary without dramatically changing my life. I'm passionate about being underspent not overspent and here are my 10 top tips to survive BNNM - Buying Nothing New Month.

1. **Be grateful.** Write down 5 things you're grateful for each day. You'll rewire your brain and change your life forever. I do this every night before I go to bed. Most things are simple like walking to work in the sunshine, skyping my mum and dad or getting an email from my bestie Sarah who lives in the UK.
2. **Get a buddy.** Find a friend and take on the no buying challenge together. You'll keep each other accountable.
3. **Calculate your savings.** 60% of us can't afford to pay our credit cards debts and 41% of us borrow from friends, family and loans each and every month to survive until pay day. Keeping a list of what we don't buy shows us how much money we could save.
4. **Sort out your wardrobe** –Apparently the average American buys 67 brand new items of clothing each year but most of us only wear 20% of the clothes in our wardrobes. Buy Nothing New Month is a good opportunity to sort out the clothes we don't wear.
5. **Host a clothes swapping party with your friends or colleagues** – Email me for my 'How To' guide.
6. **Mend and make do** – Last year I mended, fixed and repaired broken things rather than buying new.
7. **Read what you've got** –This month I'm reading the magazines I already have at home rather than buying new.
8. **Start a swap shop** – Start a swap shop at your office, school or church to swap books, children's toys or DVD's.
9. **Go out and have fun** – Instead of going to the shops I now ride my bicycle along the river or go to the beach.
10. **Celebrate your successes** – Quitting buying, shopping and spending is tough. On New Year's Eve 2012, I decided to quit shopping. I pledged and promised to buy nothing new or 2nd-hand for one whole year (2013). I failed. I saw buying nothing as a hardship filled with doom and gloom, like a year of punishment. 'Negativity creates negativity'—my year of no buying lasted just 4 months. In 2014, I tried again. Second time around, I saw buying nothing new or 2nd-hand for a year as an exciting opportunity, an adventure and a whole new way to live my life—a lifestyle experiment. Positive thinking creates positive experiences. I succeeded. It took me 13 weeks to break my impulse shopping addiction and habit of buying 'stuff' and 2014 was an amazing life-changing year.

What will you do this October?

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