

Organizing Your Store Shopping

Anyone who's well acquainted with me will tell you that I'm more absent-minded than even I care to admit. If I don't have an item on a shopping list, it's hot or miss as to whether I'll actually remember the item once I'm in the store (or even once I've left my front door ~sigh~). So, I need a written shopping list.

That wouldn't be so bad, except one day several years ago, I got super tired of criss-crossing the grocery store a dozen times just because I was forgetting which items were grouped together on the shelves (but of course not together on my list) and had already made it to the other side of the store. And to add insult to injury, I had also forgotten to write down several items that we *really* needed. So was born the need to make a list of regular items that we needed and put them in order of their location in the store.

I have to admit that the basic foundation for the list was actually created by our oldest daughter when she had to shop for her dad. I used that basic format and have adjusted it as needed over the years.

I used Microsoft Word to create my document, but the process will be similar with any word processor software.

Start with a blank document. Set three evenly-spaced columns and apply to the whole document. Turn on bullets. Change the bullet design to an unshaded square. Type the first item that you need for a particular store. Keep adding items, moving them around as you remember where some of them are. Add the store name up in the header area.

If you need to specify aisles/sections (yes, I have them indicated on **my** lists), click on the first listed item in an aisle and turn on borders above it. A fairly thin line will work. Repeat for the beginning of each aisle/section (except a line isn't needed at the very beginning of the list ~smile~).

If your list runs on to a second page, highlight the entire document (CTRL-A in Microsoft Word will do that) and change to a smaller font. If you're already using a smaller font, it's time to consolidate some of the items or to delete items that you no longer purchase.

Save the file with the store name and place it into a specific folder just for shopping lists.

Once you have the first list done, you can either follow the same process for the other stores you shop in, or copy the first one and change as needed. Every store is set up differently, and the same items are NOT always grouped together, even among different stores of the same company.

To use the list, print out a copy of the store you need. (I normally print my shopping lists on the back of a sheet of paper that had printing on one side that I don't need to save.) Color in the squares for the products that you need to pick up on your next trip. I've found over the years that it's actually easier for me to see if I use an ink color other than

black since I print my list in black – green seems to work really well for me lately. Product quantities needed can be written either to the left of the colored-in square or to the right of the product.

You can print the list out just before shopping and fill it out. Or post the list(s) in your kitchen right after a shopping trip (or place on your desk for inspiration as it strikes) and fill in items as they come up. Since it's a list of regular items that you pick up at that store (my definition of regular for these lists can include items that we only purchase 2 or 3 times a year, but that we *do* purchase every year), you can visually scroll down the list and check your on-hand quantities before shopping.

You can check the store ad before you head to the store (many are online now, too) and list any specials that you want to possibly take advantage of. I enjoy those Buy-One-Get-One-Free specials – I normally specify them with a B1G1F notation to the right of the product, along with any quantity limitations. You can also write a little “c” to the left of the colored-in square if you have a coupon for the product.

As you pick up each item in the store, mark through it on your list with your pen.

Each time you go to the store, check the location of items against your list. (Stores are famous for suddenly moving items to make you hunt for them and see other products that you might not have noticed otherwise.) Plus, confirm the location of any new items you may have added to your list.

** If you need step-by-step instructions or would like to see an example list, you can find them on our [Home Life](#) page.

About The Author

Marie Rice is the founder and editor of [PartOfTheWhole.com](#) - wellness for body, mind, and spirit. She enjoys helping others reach their goals. When she's not online, Marie's spending time with her family, gardening, or **most likely** – reading a book!