



# The Shopping Challenge

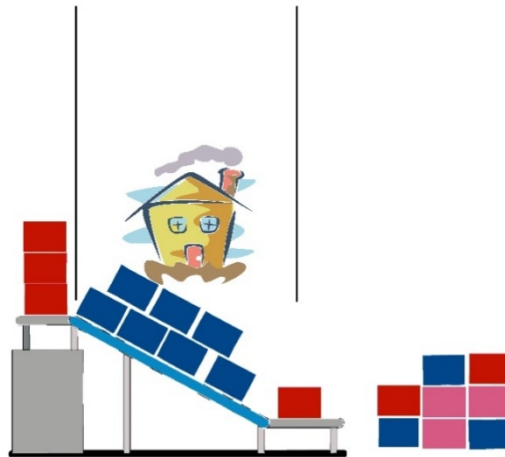
# Accumulation

There are 2 key things that we need to maintain, organise and plan at this end of the conveyor belt.

1. Reduce the accumulation of things that could become clutter
2. Control what's coming onto the conveyor belt.

You are already familiar with the Clutter Clearing Conveyor belt concept - things come into our home or onto our conveyor belt, things travel along the conveyor belt or stay on the conveyor belt / in our home, and things eventually - hopefully! - come off the conveyor belt or go out of our home.

Clutter Clearing is what we do when we get things OFF the conveyor belt or out of our home. Accumulation is what happens when things come ON to the conveyor belt or into our home.



If we are going to have meaningful and lasting success with our Clutter Clearing, we need to get control of the Clutter Clearing end of the conveyor belt AND the accumulation end. Just concentrating on the Clutter Clearing end of the conveyor belt will mean that, over time, the accumulation end of the conveyor belt will eventually cause the old clutter that has been cleared to be replaced with new clutter.

So what can we do to control the accumulation end of the conveyor belt?

LOTS! On the following pages are 10 things you can do to reduce the accumulation end of the conveyor belt. Identify AT LEAST 3 of them that you can implement in your home to reduce the accumulation end of your conveyor belt so that you achieve more success quicker when you do some Clutter Clearing.

# Accumulation Reduction Ideas

1. Accumulation ban. Only buy what you know you NEED and will UUSE in the next 2 weeks. As you go to buy something ask yourself:

**Do I really NEED this?**

**Will I really, honestly USE this in the next 2 weeks?**

If not then save yourself the money and don't buy it.

2. Make and stick to shopping with a list.
  - ✓ That list has only what you NEED and will USE on it from one week to the next.
  - ✓ You only add things to that list as you NEED to replace the existing one you have e.g. shampoo. When you realise you have less than a week's supply, it goes on a shopping list so that you will finish and be able to let go of / recycle the shampoo container quite quickly after you have brought a replacement one on the shopping list.
  - ✓ You will know what you NEED for your grocery shopping as you PLAN your meals using the weekly planner and then check what ingredients you already have in your cupboards, fridge and freezer so you are only buying the ingredients you don't already have.
  - ✓ You are unlikely to NEED any clothes or household items on a regular weekly basis.
3. Commit to going shopping with cash instead of your credit or debit cards. This certainly concentrates your mind as to what you are spending on what!

If you don't trust yourself to only use cash, or you know your resistance is low, put your credit and debit cards in an ice-block. Find a small plastic food container big enough to hold the cards. If appropriate, put them in a plastic sandwichbag first. Then fill the plastic container with water and put in the freezer. This will prevent easy access for impulse buys. If you find yourself trying to melt the ice to get to the card quicker, then you'll know you have a problem with shopping / impulse buys that you need to deal with as well.

How do you know how much cash to go shopping with?

- ✓ Look through your grocery bills from the past 4weeks.
- ✓ Highlight anything that you haven't used since you bought it and/or was an impulse buy.  
BE HONEST.
- ✓ For each weekly receipt, add up what you've highlighted and deduct from the receipt total.
- ✓ Add up the 4 totals you have for the 4 weeks.
- ✓ Divide by 4 to give you an average. That is much you REALISTICALLY need for shopping.

4. Become aware of your buying habits.

How?



In your notebook, or on a piece of paper on the back of your front door, create a table as shown below.

Date	Where shopped	What bought	Amount paid £ / \$
10/9/14	Supermarket	5 bags of groceries	£100 / \$160
13/9/14	Staples	Paper, pack of 5 pens, 1 printer cartridge / toner	£54 / \$100

Every time you go shopping, simply log it on your table to see what your shopping habits are.

Notice:

- ✓ how many times in a week you go shopping
- ✓ how much you spend, on average, in any one store
- ✓ how much of what you buy is based on **NEED**
- ✓ how much of what you buy is based on **IMPULSE**

5. By doing point 2 and 3, you're unlikely to spend **EXACTLY** the amount of cash you go shopping with. e.g. you may spend £96 / \$96 from £100 / \$100 cash.

Put the spare cash in a bank account or money box so you can literally **SEE** how much money you are saving.

Notice:

- ✓ how much you save, on average, each week
- ✓ how much you have saved in a month

You may want to think of a non-accumulation reward that you can give yourself with the money you save each month e.g. a pampering day, a manicure, a bottle of bubbly!

6. Unsubscribe from ALL e-mails that you get from places that you've bought from who send you e-mails with special offers, limited time offers etc. e.g. Amazon, department stores etc. **THEY ARE TRYING TO GET YOU TO IMPULSEBUY!**

It will also reduce your e-mail clutter that takes time to delete or go through.

This is especially important if you know you tend to look at what they offer then work out how you can justify it, rather than buying according to **NEED**.



7. PLAN your internet time to reduce impulse buying resulting from surfing the internet.

This includes:

- ✓ checking e-mails
- ✓ checking online
- ✓ being on the Clutter Clearing TV / Community!

You will know how easy it is to go on the internet with one intention, then get distracted with things we see that 'look interesting' and go off at a tangent to our original goal.

Set your timer and limit the amount of time you spend on the internet each day. Start with 15 minutes and see how much you get done of what you **NEED** to do each day. The ticking timer in the background can act as a useful reminder that we have limited time available to us, and we literally can't afford to waste it - especially with impulse buys.

8. Reduce the amount of unwanted paperwork coming through your front door by putting a note or sign on your front door saying:

**PLEASE NO FLYERS, FREE NEWSPAPERS, COLD CALLERS, MENUS,  
BUSSINESS CARDS ETC.  
WE PUT THEM ALL STRAIGHT IN THE RECYCLING.**

Although it doesn't reduce the amount completely, it does significantly reduce the amount and will reduce the amount of temptation put in your way.

9. Commit to putting **'RETURN TO SENDER - not known at this address'** on unwanted and unsolicited post that you receive - even if it's addressed to you but from a company you don't know. Simply cross out your name and address and write next to it (they need to see your name and address to know who to remove from their database).



To make double sure you get taken off their database, I have found that if you also call up the company by opening the envelope (you can reseal it afterwards), finding a contact telephone number, calling the company and advising them that the person they sent it to (you) has moved and you do not have a forwarding address. If they ask you what their new address is say you don't know - if they push you just say you're renting the property. If they try to get your name and address, just say you're the new owner (they're trying to get your details to send you things instead!).

10. Put a 'printing' ban in place during ClutterCollege i.e. don't print off as much from your computer or the internet as you have in the past.

Why?

- ✓ It is costing you money to print things (paper, printer cartridges)
- ✓ You are almost certainly not reading everything that you print off

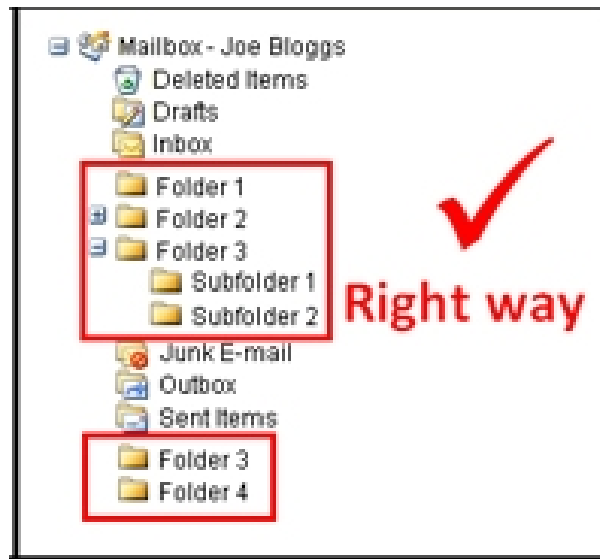
This will be a real challenge for information junkies!

What to do instead.

## E-mails

How do you put a printing ban in place with e-mails?

Similar principle to bookmarking web pages. Instead of printing off all the e-mails or documents you want to read and putting them in a pile 'to read later', you create a folder in your e-mail in-box where you can put all the e-mails you would **LIKE** to read or think you **NEED** to read.



Then when, and only when, you have time set aside in your weekly planner to do some reading, go to that folder and choose an e-mail to print off and read. That way you are using less paper, less cartridge ink (i.e. saving money) and only printing off what you know you actually read. You still have the information in the e-mail format, but you are not taking up physical space with paperwork you don't actually need or use.

You may be surprised how few things you actually read - or want to read - when you set aside time to do the reading. You may also be surprised that you never actually manage to set aside time to do the reading.

### Note the cost

If you want to go one step further and find out how much this information junkie printing has cost you in terms of money, the next time you change a printer cartridge, either put a sticker with the date you have changed it on the cartridge when you put it in your printer. When you come to change it again you will be able to work out how long it has lasted. Similarly you could keep a note of how frequently you have to buy paper to print on.

You might be surprised just how much you desire to have paperwork with useful information is costing you!



Reduce the accumulation of things that could become clutter

What 1 NEW thing are you going to do this month to further reduce the amount of potential clutter coming onto your conveyor belt / into your home this month?

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What do you need to do to make sure that you succeed with this?

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## Controlling what comes onto your Conveyor Belt – The Shopping Challenge

This is all about minimising the amount of grocery shopping we need to do every week / month by using food that we already have, thereby resisting those impulse buys.

## Step 1:

**Using the following sheets, list everything you have in your fridge, freezer and cupboards.**

NOTE: When listing things, make sure you check the 'use by / best before' dates and throw away anything that is out of date.

## Fridge

### Expiry Date

[illegible]



## Freezer

### Expiry Date

[illegible]

## Freezer

### Expiry Date

[illegible]

## Cupboards

### Expiry Date

[illegible]

## Cupboards

### Expiry Date

[illegible]

## Step 2:

### Choose recipes using those ingredients

We need 10 recipes using those ingredients. Cross the ingredients you've listed on the previous pages off the lists when you've allocated them to a recipe.

- if they're recipes that you know off by heart or do often – still list them.
- If you don't know what to make with the ingredients you have, google 3 or 4 of the ingredients together and put 'recipe' at the end. E.g. chicken, tinned tomatoes, dried apricots, recipe. Press return and see what comes up!
- Bookmark in your web browser or print out any recipes you are going to cook.
- If a recipe has more servings than you need, cook the full recipe and put the spare portions into freezer containers. Put a label on each container saying what it is, the date it was cooked, and how many portions are contained within.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

## Plan when you're going to have those meals

Now use the following weekly planners to plan when you're going to have these meals. If they're recipes that you know off by heart or do often – still list them. We need to know what we're going to eat week by week so that we only buy what we NEED each week which will reduce the amount of food waste and the amount of space we need to store things we don't actually need or use.

Recipe: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Recipe: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Recipe: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Recipe: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Recipe: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Recipe: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Recipe: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Recipe: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Recipe: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Recipe: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Recipe: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Recipe: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_

## Shopping List of what you NEED

Now write out a list of what ingredients you actually NEED to be able to have the meals you've planned for the NEXT WEEK ONLY.

ONLY list the ingredients you NEED to buy THIS week so that you don't waste money and space buying things you won't use between this week and next week. Repeat each week, listing ONLY those things you NEED.

Then, when you go shopping, take only cash and buy the ingredients using CASH. Notice how much LESS you spend on your grocery shopping by using what you already have in your fridge, freezer and cupboards. Also notice how much more SPACE you create in your fridge, freezer and cupboards over the course of the week by using the food you already have and buying only what you need.

You could take a 'before' photograph of your fridge, freezer and cupboards at the beginning of the week and an 'after' photograph after a week and another after a month. Notice what happens.

Do this for a month and keep a record of your weekly grocery shopping bill. What do you notice?

Date: Amount Spent:

Date: Amount Spent:

Date: Amount Spent:

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## Shopping Challenge

Following the shopping challenge does 3 things:

1. Challenges you to make a stock list by going through your fridge, freezer and cupboards and Clutter Clear foodstuff that is out of date, you don't need or don't like
2. Challenges you to use ONLY what you have in your fridge, freezer and cupboards so you use up things you already have.
3. Challenges you to make the time to PLAN your meals for a month.
4. Challenges you to spend ONLY what you NEED when you go shopping, which will save you money.
5. Challenges you to shop with and STICK TO a shopping list, so you don't impulse buy.
6. Challenges you to reduce your grocery shopping significantly, thereby Clutter Clearing food that you already have by cooking and eating it so that it comes 'off' your Clutter Conveyor Belt.
7. Challenges you to SAVE the money you SAVE on your weekly grocery shopping and not spend it on things you don't need and won't use.

So how much did you save over the 4 weeks compared to the 4 weeks of grocery shopping BEFORE you took on the shopping challenge?

What else did you notice as a result of doing the shopping challenge?

Week Commencing: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL SPENT: \_\_\_\_\_

Week Commencing: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL SPENT: \_\_\_\_\_

Week Commencing: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL SPENT: \_\_\_\_\_

Week Commencing: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL SPENT: \_\_\_\_\_