

GROCERIES... STRATEGIES for reducing the overwhelm...

These tips are written by The Thriving Madly community members as a resource for our community. To be shared within our community with permission of our members.

- Choosing time of day - Thinking about the best time for me internal resource wise, and secondly when the store is busy.
- Ordering my list by aisles so that I can get in and out as quickly as possible
- Definitive list, No spontaneous decisions.
- Weekdays are better than weekends.
- Music or podcasts in earphones are fairly loud.
- Don't care who sees me talking to myself.
- Don't use a self scan machine.
- Going at quieter times and wearing noise cancelling headphones make shopping significantly less overwhelming for me. I also find online shopping helpful for things I'm happy to buy without seeing.
- There's a particular challenge around dietary stuff. The Countdown website has ingredient lists so I try to research what I'm getting before I go.
- The Countdown app also has a list feature that will sort your groceries by aisle for your selected store.
- Another challenge is the lack of accessible bathrooms in supermarkets.
- Knowing which supermarket had toilets is very helpful.
- Countdown ferrymead has a toilet in store by the bakery. Which isn't locked so you don't have to ask for access etc. It's a unisex toilet with a baby change table and wheelchair access.
- I have used online shopping but framed it as a 'list' rather than shopping.
- But this worked best when I had a limited range of recipes I cooked.
- Having a list of easy options for meals helped.
- Headphones with my favourite music.
- Eat beforehand.
- Rough list and forgive myself if I forget something.
- Fixed budget.
- Do the crucial things first.
- For weight management I buy junk snacks separately.
- Ask the supermarket for a layout map so that you can plan which aisles you need to go down and which ones can be by-passed - makes the trip shorter.

- Take a list and write down if there is an alternative product to use if the one you are used to isn't on the shelf.
- I keep a tick box list on Google keep, which I use from my computer and phone. If it is Countdown, I use click-and-collect or go at quieter times. For PakNSave I go after 8:30pm on Sunday evening with my noise cancelling headphones and use the shop 'n go scanner so that I don't have to repack a million times.
- Quiet hour is at 2.30-3.30 Wednesdays at most Countdown Stores
- <https://www.countdown.co.nz/info/more-services/quiet-hour>
- Countdown online shopping. They have discounted delivery 🚚 payable monthly.
- I have joined up with shop and go at pak n save which is great so I can keep track of how much I'm spending and it makes the trip a lot quicker too I order my shopping list in the order of the aisles I go down, I wear headphones and sunglasses and try and find a park in the least busiest spot in the car park
- Combating vestibular issues called supermarket syndrome by doing the following.
 - 1. Take a trolley to use as a walking aid
 - 2. List on my phone to focus on
 - 3. Only walk down the aisles I need
 - 4. Take little rest breaks disguised as "browsing the aisle"
 - 5. Buy a snack or drink (loving strawberry milk atm)
 - 6. Use self check out at the end of a row if possible
 - 7. Receipts are paperless on app
 - 8. Sit in the car and drink or eat the shopping reward
 - 9. Go straight home, no side quests after

- <https://alteaphysio.com/visually-induced-dizziness.../>



- ALTEAPHYSIO.COM
- Visually Induced Dizziness "Supermarket Syndrome" - Altea Physiotherapy + Wellness
- For me I have dropped back to click and collect to get through. The safe premium parking is also a plus.
- If I go with someone, this doesn't seem too intense because conversation can make it unnoticeable.

- If I go by myself, I have my headphones in, loud so I can't hear anyone and I'm on a mission with my shopping list to get in and out asap.
- My kids and I go Monday nights fortnightly just so I can have less people and my kids keep my sanity. But we are in and out very quick. This can mean I forget things or buy too much of one thing. I wear headphones if I go by myself just so I can disassociate with those around me.
- **Be honest about the challenges you face with the staff and people around you for example -**
- Something I have found helpful is to say "I know mate, I don't like the supermarket either, there are too many people judging us without knowing our story." I say this loud enough for the judgemental people to hear, sometimes while making eye contact with them for the last part of it. It is successful most of the time but it also feels adversarial. It's not something I want to do but it feels necessary at times. The best example was a lady who works for New World who gently enquired why the boys were reacting the way they were. I explained that they were autistic and struggled to communicate their needs and that what she was seeing wasn't naughty kids but kids trying to communicate those needs in increasingly desperate and extreme ways. At later visits I found staff to be less judgemental and much kinder. She told me that she spoke with her coworkers and explained the situation. This feels like the ideal situation, respectful curiosity leading to greater understanding and acceptance of differences.
- **Advocate for yourself for example** - I have super sensitive eyes from an autoimmune disease (and also having the trait of high sensory sensitivity generally) so I find LED lighting really difficult. I contacted my local supermarket a couple of years ago about how much the LED spotlights hurt my eyes (I wore a cap to help with this). Others must have also complained since they took some of those lights out.
- Other things I do is allow enough time to sit in the car for a bit before I go in, especially if I have had to do other errands before that, and also try and not do too many errands in one outing.

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