



50

DAYS TO A BETTER  
**GROCERY BUDGET**

CRYSTAL PAINE

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# INTRODUCTION



Hi! I'm Crystal Paine, founder of MoneySavingMom.com, bestselling author of *Say Goodbye to Survival Mode*, and creator of the popular course, *Make Over Your Morning*. I'm so excited for you to join me in this journey to a better grocery budget!

Over the years, I've worked diligently to tweak our grocery budget to fit our ever-changing family needs. In the early years of my marriage, my husband and I learned *many* lessons on how to stretch a dollar. Those years have forever changed my approach to budgeting, and I'm thrilled to be able to share some of the lessons I've learned with you here in my new eBook, *5 Days to a Better Grocery Budget!*

## My Frugal Journey

My mom was the one who first introduced me to couponing, made me [my coupon organization box](#), and gave me a copy of *Miserly Moms*. Not only that, but she also put me in charge of the grocery shopping, [menu-planning](#), and cooking for our family of nine for a few years while I was still living at home. Talk about great practice for the future!

When my husband and I first married and were [living on a beans-and-rice budget](#) in order to [stay out of debt while he went through law school](#), I thrived on coming up with creative ways to pinch pennies. I didn't always enjoy barely making ends meet, but I certainly loved the thrill of getting the best bang for my buck.

One way we saved thousands of dollars during those lean years was to [keep our grocery and household products budget to \\$35 a week](#). I had fun [taking couponing to a whole new level](#) — I spent at least a few hours each week becoming proficient in "couponese" and playing the "[Drug Store Game](#)."

While my approach to budgeting has changed over the years, and we're no longer surviving on a "beans and rice" budget, those lean years have given me the tools I've needed to continue to stretch our dollars.

As you join me over the next five days, I want you to remember something very important: Everyone has a unique situation. Maybe you're not on a "beans and rice" budget so you don't want to clip coupons, but you still want to shave off a few dollars here and there from your grocery bill. Maybe you're someone who is struggling to make ends meet, and you need help stretching your dollars as far as they can go.

Whatever your situation, remember to give yourself grace. It takes practice to master the art of budgeting -- *and there really is NO perfect way to save a buck!* Making little changes here and there can have a HUGE impact in the long run, so keep that in mind as you work to change your spending habits!

I'm so excited to be able to encourage you along the way! Let's get started!

With care,

*Crystal Paine*

# 5 Days to a Better Grocery Budget Day #1

Are you wishing that you could find a way to get a better handle on your grocery budget? Welcome to *5 Days to a Better Grocery Budget*, my newest ebook designed to help you navigate the process of streamlining your grocery budget!

*As we begin this process of setting up a better grocery budget, I want to start by giving you three important reminders:*

## **1. There is no right way to set up a grocery budget.**

I think one of the big reasons people don't create a budget in the first place is because they are worried they will "do it wrong".

Here's what you need to hear loud and clear: **There is no right or wrong way to set up a grocery budget. All that matters is that you set one up that works for you, and then stick with it.**

Yes, I know. I'm sharing such amazingly incredible stuff here today. {Insert sarcasm.} ☺

But seriously, **if you set up a grocery budget and stick with it, you have yourself a successful grocery budget.** You are a success!

So stop stressing over the "how" of setting up a grocery budget. Stop feeling frustrated that you don't think you're going to do it right. Just get up and do it and follow through with it. I know you can!

## **2. There is no magic number that is the "perfect grocery budget amount".**

I promise. I know that you can read other blogs — or even [this blog](#)! — and feel like you need to have a grocery budget that is lower than XX amount or you are failing at the whole grocery budgeting thing.

There is no way to fail at your grocery budget except for not having a grocery budget at all. ANY grocery budget that you set up and stick with is a successful grocery budget. **And ANY amount you choose that works with your income and takes care of your family's needs and doesn't make you miserable is a great amount.**

### **3. There is no grocery budget competition.**

Spending less or spending more doesn't make you less or more of a success or failure. It just makes you uniquely you.

**Pick a number that works for YOUR family.** For YOUR own needs. For YOUR own season of life. And don't apologize for it or feel that you need to explain it.

Trust me, I get how easy it is to do both of those things — [especially if you have a frugal blog](#) or lots of frugal friends! But this past year, I'm really stepping into the freedom that comes from **being okay with doing what's best for our own family — even if other people don't agree, don't approve, or don't get it.**

So breathe a big sigh of relief. You can do this!

# 5 Days to a Better Grocery Budget

## Day #2

One of the questions I get asked all the time is, ***“How much should I spend on groceries?”***

I wish that there was a simple one-size-fits-all answer to this question, but like I said in Day 1, what works for one family won't work for another family.

We all have so many different variables that play into what a good grocery budget amount is for us. I really encourage you to not just pick some grocery budget number out of thin air because it “sounds good” or you “think it's doable” or you “know someone who has a budget that low”.

That's a surefire way to set yourself up for grocery budget failure – or at least a whole lot of stress trying to stick with a grocery budget that wasn't designed with your family's needs in mind.

### **What To Consider When Determining Your Grocery Budget:**

- **Your own situation:** Do you have young kids or a crazy work schedule which means you need to buy more convenience foods/products?
- **Your family's dietary needs:** Are you gluten-free, dairy-free, or eating according to a nutritional plan that might cost more money?
- **Your family's priorities:** Do you like to host lots of people into your home or bake/cook for others?
- **Your family's preferences:** Do you like certain foods that are more expensive or like to have more meat and less beans and rice?
- **What you'll include in your grocery budget:** Will you include hygiene products/pet products/diapers, etc. in the grocery budget?

There are no right or wrong answers to the above questions. Well, okay, I take that back. There ARE right answers and wrong answers! The right answers are what is best for you and your own family. The wrong answers are trying to do what you think works well for another family.

## How to Determine a Reasonable Grocery Budget

After taking all of these things into consideration, also look at your recent grocery receipts to get an idea of how much you have typically spent on groceries over the past few months. I encourage you to come up with a weekly amount that you think is very doable to start with.

If you have the wiggle room in your budget, choose a number that feels somewhat high. Why? Because I want you to set yourself up for success from the get-go.

And remember this: **Success in the beginning is just setting up a budget and following it.** As you get better at it and more comfortable with it, then you can work on lowering it. But for now, just focus on picking a number that you feel is a reasonable number that will not make you feel stressed or frustrated to try to stick with.

If you need a ballpark idea to go off of, **I'd say anywhere between \$25 to \$40 per person is usually a good figure to start with.** (But don't stress if that feels too low for you right now! It's better to start somewhere and choose a higher number and stick with it, than to just give up because you can't get it as low as you'd like to get it.)

## Our Grocery Budget Evolution

**For the first 8 years of our marriage, our grocery budget was in the \$10-\$15 per person range.** That's really low, I know, but we were barely eeking by some of those years and I knew that our grocery budget was one area where I could really save a lot of money since I had the time, the know-how, and I found it a fun "hobby" to see how far I could stretch every grocery budget dollar.

I was a **hardcore couponer** and **drugstore game shopper** + I planned super simple menus that were based almost entirely around what I could get on a really great deal at the store. This worked well for us and saved us *thousands* of dollars over those eight years.

However, as our kids came along and got older and our season of life changed, we've slowly raised the budget to allow more breathing room. I still LOVE finding a great grocery bargain and am always on the lookout for them when I'm shopping, but I've given myself grace to not feel like I need to have the grocery budget super, super low or spend a few additional hours of my week going to multiple stores in order to cut my grocery bill by \$50 to \$75.

**A reasonable amount for our family at this season of life is allotting about \$25 per person per week.** This allows us to eat higher quality foods, purchase a few convenience foods, have more meat, and **keep our menus simple and nutritious.**

I could still keep our grocery budget really, really low and I could still enjoy doing it. However, it would take me an additional 2-3 hours per week to realistically make that happen. Right now, because we have the wiggle room in the budget, I've chosen to spend those hours on the business where I can make significantly more per hour than I could ever save by using coupons.

For me, that's what wise financial management is. It's about weighing the return on your investment of time against your priorities and deciding what the best use is of your limited resources in that season of life.

# 5 Days to a Better Grocery Budget

## Day #3

Once you've [decided on a grocery budget amount that works for your family](#), you need to set up some sort of accountability for sticking with that budget. This is key for the success of your grocery budget.

**You can't just mentally kind of, sort of have an idea of a grocery budget for it to work.**

Really think through what would work best for you, your spouse, and your family when it comes to tracking your grocery budget. There are two different systems I would recommend...



(Download a [free envelope system template here](#).)

### 1. Cash Envelope System

A [cash envelope system](#) is just that — you take out your allotted grocery budget amount in cash every month (or weekly or bi-weekly, depending upon when you get paid) and just take that cash to the store.

**The benefits of using cash are that you can't go over budget. When the money's gone, the money's gone!** It forces you to

stick with your budget and to really analyze each purchase as you're putting it into the cart.

The drawbacks are that you have to mess with going to the bank or ATM to get cash — which can be a hassle for some people. In addition, some people find that they spend more or spend the cash on non-grocery purchases because they have it in their wallet and it's "burning a hole in their pocket".

Need some more encouragement to try a cash envelope system? Read these posts:

- [6 Reasons People Argue Against a Cash Envelope System](#)
- [The Envelope System Experiment](#)
- [Dave Ramsey's Envelope System](#)

## 2. Virtual Envelope System

If messing with cash seems tedious to you, a great alternative is to use a Virtual Cash Envelope system through a program like [YouNeedaBudget](#) or [EveryDollar](#).

These apps allow you to set up your “cash envelopes” or budget categories and then deduct your purchases throughout the month. This way, you can always have a running total of how much you’ve spent and how much you have left in each budget category you’ve set up.

The benefits of using this system are that you can keep better tabs on what you’re spending your money on and when you’re spending it and how you’re doing on your budget overall at a glance. It’s also nice because you don’t have to mess with sharing cash envelopes if you’re like our family and both spouses pitch in with grocery shopping and other shopping at different times throughout the month.

The drawbacks are that you are swiping a card — which means that you can more easily go over budget than you can when you use cash. Plus, it’s more sophisticated than cash (i.e. you have to mess with inputting the data after each shopping trip and tracking how much you have left in each budget category).

Need some more encouragement to try a virtual cash envelope system? Check out these posts:

- [Why We Love YouNeedaBudget](#)
- [How YNAB Helped Us Pay Off \\$50,000 In Debt](#)
- [4 Personal Finance Products & Why They Might Work For You](#)



## A Note About Overspending

With both of these systems, you can still overspend – *because YOU are ultimately the one who is in charge of what you spend and what you don't spend.* A budget doesn't work unless you do! 😊

Overspending could be the result of a [self-discipline issue](#). Or, it could be even deeper than that: **You could be overspending because you are trying to fill a void of some sort in your life.**

When you are tempted to spend money that you either don't have, isn't budgeted, or is an impulse buy, start training yourself to stop and ask: Why?

Why am I wanting to spend this money? What need am I trying to fulfill? Why do I want this thing or experience? What do I think it's going to do for me?

The more you can step back and ask "Why?", the more you'll be able to get to the root of the issues and deal with those versus just trying to slap a bandage on surface problems — which will never resolve the issues longterm.

# 5 Days to a Better Grocery Budget

## Day #4

So far, we've talked about how there is no single right way to set up a grocery budget, how much you should spend on groceries, and how to track how much you're spending.

Today, I want to tackle one of the most important parts of sticking with a grocery budget... namely, **how to actually stick with it!**

You can have all the best intentions in the world, you can set up an amazing grocery budget, and you can create a really good accountability system, but **if you don't actually follow through with it, you'll never be successful at grocery budgeting.**

Before we talk about some practical tips on how to actually stick with your grocery budget, I want to first address three things I *don't* want you to do. Because if you do any of these three things, it could keep you from being successful in following through with your budget.

### 1. Don't Make Excuses

I often hear people say things like, *"I can't have a grocery budget because we live in a high-cost-of-living area."* Or, *"We can't stick to a grocery budget because we have variable income."*

Here's the deal: **You can sit there and make excuses or you can get up and do the best you can do with the situation you're in and the income you have. It's your choice.**

You can do this, too! Nothing's stopping you from success except your own excuses!

### 2. Don't Stress Over Making Mistakes

Remember, if you're brand new to budgeting, you will make mistakes. You will probably find that there are times when it's more difficult than you think it should be.

You will probably go over budget some in the beginning. This is normal. This is how you learn and grow and get better.

When you make a mistake, don't beat yourself up. Don't call yourself a failure. Don't throw up your hands and decide that this grocery budgeting thing isn't for you.

Remind yourself that this is part of the learning curve, think about what you can learn from your mistakes, and consider what you need to change or do differently so you don't make the same mistake again. And then give yourself grace and get back in the game!

### **3. Don't Worry if You Have to Tweak It**

You will likely need to tweak the budget as you go — especially if you are new to budgeting and just picked a number that you *think* will work. As real life happens and you are actually trying to stick with this number that you had initially thought would work, there's a good chance you'll find you need to change it.

That's totally okay and acceptable. In fact, I always tell people that it usually takes 3-6 months when you're brand new to budgeting to really figure out what a good number is. Tweaking is part of the process!

In addition to the initial tweaking, you'll also want to tweak your budget as your needs and your family changes. As time goes on, if the number you have chosen just isn't working and is making your life miserable, it's 100% okay to tweak that number again.

Like I said earlier, a good grocery budget is one that works for you and your own family. So be sure to regularly revisit the number you've chosen to see if you need to change it.

We've significantly increased our budget the past two years because that is what was best for our family. I don't feel guilty about that. Instead, I'm grateful that we can do what is best for our own family and that we've found a grocery budget amount that works best for us right now.

## **2 Simple Tips on How to Actually Stick With Your Budget**

**Plan Your Menu With Your Budget In Mind** — Think about how much items cost and keep this in mind when you are planning your menu. If you have no idea, start keeping a price book to help you learn the general prices of items so you can better gauge how much the recipes you've chosen on your menu plan are going to cost.

**Use a Calculator At the Store** — One simple way to save money on your grocery bill is to always bring a calculator with you when you shop. Since **I use cash when I shop**, it's important to keep a tally of how much I've spent so far so that I don't get up to the register and not have enough money to pay for my groceries. Keeping a running total also encourages me to carefully evaluate all purchases as I put them into my cart — and it helps ward off the temptation to make impulse purchases on things I don't really need to buy.

*For more inspiration, check out these posts:*

- [Brigette's \\$39 Grocery Shopping Trip + Weekly Menu Plan for 6](#)
- [6 Ways We're Keeping Our Grocery Budget Low — Without Using Coupons](#)

# 5 Days to a Better Grocery Budget

## Day #5

Once you've set up your grocery budget and created some accountability to actually stick with it, it's time to start considering some simple ways you could shave off some of your grocery expenses.

Groceries are one of the budget areas that are the very easiest to cut — and it's the first place I encourage people to start if they are looking to get their finances in better order.

Why? Because the majority of Americans could make some simple changes in their lifestyle and grocery purchases that would pretty easily reduce their grocery expenses by \$50 or more!

Now, here's the thing: **some of you don't need to cut a penny off your grocery budget.** You have worked hard to keep your budget low, you are couponing ninjas, you cook from scratch, you plan inexpensive menus, you cook with beans and rice, and you eat up all your leftovers.

Day 5 is not for you. Day 5 is for the average American who is feeling like they know they are spending way more on groceries than they should, but they just need some ideas as to how to get started lowering their budget.

I thought through a lot of grocery-saving strategies and came up with 10 simple techniques that could save you \$5 per week if you employed them — for a total of \$50 in savings every week!

*If you're looking for a little wiggle room in your budget, try a few of these ideas:*

### 1. Use Up What You Have on Hand

When I plan our menu, I look through the cupboards, pantry, fridge, and freezer to see what we already have on hand. Maybe a recipe only used half a carton of something; maybe I have extras from an item I got marked down; or maybe there other items we didn't use the week before.

I take note of these items and try to incorporate them into the menu plan for the following week. If you need some ideas on how to incorporate these ingredients into your menu plan, check out [RecipeMatcher.com](http://RecipeMatcher.com), [SuperCook.com](http://SuperCook.com), or [MyFridgeFood.com](http://MyFridgeFood.com).



In addition, I often get creative in substituting items I already have on hand instead of buying something. Learning how to substitute ingredients has saved us so much money and extra trips to the store. [Here's a great list of recipe substitutions](#). You can often Google for ingredient substitutions and get some great ideas.

Here's an example of how I create menu ideas and recipes based upon what I have on hand. Check out [this post](#) for step-by-step help on [How to Plan a Menu](#).

## **2. Look at Your Grocery Fliers Online**

Planning your menu based upon what's on sale at your local store(s) is where you *really* start to see the savings happening! Most grocery store chains have their weekly sale fliers available online. If not, you will often receive a copy in the mail. Or, you could even pick one up at the store if you're going to be driving right by it.

Quickly browse through these sale fliers and see if there are any exceptional deals on items like meat or dairy or produce. Whenever possible, plan some of your menu based upon these sales!



Most of the time, the hottest deals of the week are listed predominantly in the front page of the flier. Oftentimes, these front-page deals are “loss-leaders.”

(“Loss-leaders” are deals which the store is actually breaking even – or losing money on! They are designed to be good enough to “bait” you into shopping at that store.)

Don’t neglect to look through the full flier, though. Sometimes there are great deals which are hidden on the middle pages. However, remember that just because something is listed in the sales flier doesn’t necessarily mean it’s a great deal. Over time, you’ll start learning what are the “rock bottom” prices for items you buy and how often they go on sale in your area.



### 3. Only Buy the Produce That's on Sale

Produce prices can kill your budget — but they don't have to! One thing we try to do is pretty much stick to buying what produce is in season and on sale. (You can [print a Seasonal Produce Chart here](#).)

For instance, when apples are on sale, I'll buy a few bags of them and that will be our go-to fruit for the week. When grapes are on sale, we mostly eat grapes for fruit that week. When carrots are on sale, we eat a lot of carrots.

Sure, this means that we eat a lot of the same kinds of produce in one week. It might seem boring, but it sure saves a lot of money. And over the course of the year, we're eating lots of different fruits and veggies!

### 4. Print Some Coupons

Once you've [made your shopping list](#) based upon the [weekly sales fliers](#), check the [Coupon Database](#) and [Store Deal Match-Ups](#) on our site to see if there are any printable coupons available for products you're planning to buy.

If you're not familiar with these resources on our site, here's how they work:

**Coupon Database:** Just search for the product name of what you're already planning to buy and the [Coupon Database](#) will automatically generate a list of all coupons available for that product. It does all the legwork for you. All you have to do is type in the products you want to buy and print the coupons!



**Store Deal Database:** We have a listing of the [best weekly sales and coupon match-ups at over 100 grocery store chains nationwide](#) on the [Store Deals Section](#) of our site? Find and [click on your store\(s\) logo here](#) and it will take you to this week's best deals list for your local store(s).

Quickly scan the list to see if there are any deals you're interested in doing and print any coupons you'll need for those deals. You can also click through the link at the bottom of each list to see an extensive sale and deal list put together by a blogger who lives in your area.

(Note: If you don't want to mess with checking the Store Deal Section every week, you can [sign up to have the list of the best deals for your local stores emailed to you](#) each week when the sale ads come up. We're all about saving you time – and money!)

Taking five minutes of your time to check the [Coupon Database](#) and Store Deal Match-ups when planning your shopping trip could easily save you \$5 or \$10 – or more!



## 5. Ditch Breakfast in a Box

You can save a lot of money and feed your family more wholesomely if you ditch breakfast out of a cereal box! I'm a big fan of make ahead breakfasts — that way you don't have to worry about cooking a hot breakfast every morning!

Pancakes and waffles can be made ahead of time and frozen. Just whip up a batch

of pancakes or waffles, let cool, and then stick in airtight freezer bags. When you're ready to serve, you can warm them in the oven, microwave, or toaster oven.

[Breakfast burritos](#) are a hearty grab-and-go food that teenage boys and men seem to especially love. Make a big batch on the weekends, freeze individually in foil, and then they can just be pulled out and microwaved before heading out the door in the morning. (Be sure to remove the foil before microwaving!)

We love muffins at our house! To make them ahead, just bake your favorite muffin recipe, let them cool, and stick them in an airtight freezer bag or other container. When you're ready to eat them, just pull out however many you need and microwave or let them thaw for 15 or 20 minutes and they are ready to eat!

Love oatmeal? [Make your own instant oatmeal packets!](#) They are quick and easy to make, very inexpensive, and you can [get creative adding in a variety of mix-ins.](#)

Find a bunch of other [make ahead breakfast ideas here.](#)

## 6. Have One Meatless Dinner

If you cut your meat consumption by one meal per week, you'll usually save close to \$5! For most families, it wouldn't be too hard to [cut back on \\$5 worth of meat each week](#) — especially if you're willing to get a little creative.



**Meatless doesn't have to mean tasteless.** Try making [Bean & Cheese Burritos](#), breakfast for dinner, or even [meatless lasagna](#). Need more ideas? Check out this list of [52 Meatless Meals](#) that I posted earlier today. You can also read my post on [How to Live on Beans & Rice for a Week](#).

If your family isn't keen on the idea of going completely meatless, [stretching your meat with legumes](#) is a great way to save money while still eating meat. Mexican dishes, bean soups, and chili are recipes that you can pretty easily add in extra beans to replace some of the meat without most people realizing it.

Lentils hide especially well in taco meat, too. Just [add in cooked lentils to your ground beef](#) along with your usual seasonings and there's a good chance your family won't even notice!

Also, stop centering your meal around meat as the main thing and instead view meat as a garnish. Use it as a topping for pizza or salads, or stir some into stir fries or soups. The less the meal's focal point is a big hunk of meat, the more you'll likely save.



## 7. Cook 2 Things From Scratch

You can save so much money off your grocery bill by [cooking from scratch](#). However, if you're cooking from scratch solely for the purpose of saving money (not for the health benefits or because you enjoy it), make sure it's worth the return on your investment of time.

If you spend hours in the kitchen and it's only saving you a \$1 or so per hour to make things from scratch, it's likely not worth your time. That's why [I don't make homemade tortillas](#).

I have a personal policy that **I must be saving at least \$20 per hour to invest my time in any money-saving tactic**. This helps me to focus my energy and effort on those things that are really going to make a difference in our budget, instead of exerting half a day on something that really doesn't change our bottom line.

It's easy to think that cooking from scratch has to be a huge time investment, but that's often not the case. In fact, in 10 minutes, you can easily [throw a big batch of beans in the crockpot](#) to cook and [a loaf of bread in the bread machine](#).

You'll never know how much time something will take you or how much you'll enjoy making it until you've actually experimented with it. So go ahead, try making [homemade refried beans](#), [homemade go-gurts](#), [freezer-friendly breakfast burritos](#), [homemade baking mix](#), or [homemade pizza](#).



## 8. Have a Leftovers Night

We try to have at least one or two leftover nights per week. It saves time because we don't have to plan a dinner or make dinner or clean up the dishes from dinner. And it saves money because we don't have to buy the ingredients for another lunch or dinner.

It's such a simple, no-brainer thing, but saving money in simple ways on a regular basis adds up over time! We've also found that serving leftovers for dinner on busy nights cuts down on the temptation to grab carryout. So on busy nights, I'll often set out all the odds and ends in the fridge and declare it a leftover buffet night.

For those of you who wish you had leftovers but it seems like your hungry teens or growing kiddos eat everything you make, consider doubling a casserole or soup recipe you're making a couple times per week and sticking half the recipe in the fridge or freezer *before* you eat dinner that night. That way, you're guaranteeing you'll have "leftovers" to eat later in the week! 😊

My favorite part of eating leftovers for dinner? Less kitchen clean-up!



## 9. Save Up Your Swagbucks

When we buy specialty ingredients – such as protein powder and olive oil – we get these from [Amazon using gift cards earned through Swagbucks](#). It's a great way to be able to afford a few of those high-quality ingredients we love to use in recipes.

[I signed up with Swagbucks](#) years ago and have since earned many, many gift cards from them. While much of [my Swagbucks credit](#) now is earned from referring readers there (thank you, all!) as I've written about before, you don't need to refer others to still [earn at least \\$25 to \\$40 in Amazon gift cards from Swagbucks](#) — which can be a huge help to your grocery budget!

## 10. Don't Impulse Buy

Finally, the best way to save money on groceries is to make sure that you only buy what you planned to buy. Make a menu plan, make a grocery list, and stick with the list.

Also, you've heard it before, but it bears repeating: Don't grocery shop when you are hungry or when you feel like stress-eating. And, if you have family members who encourage you to impulse buy, leave them at home. 😊

# Final Word

I want to leave you with one final important note: If you're new to budgeting and to saving on groceries, please **do not** go and try to do all of these things this week. That's a surefire way to set yourself up for overwhelm!

Instead, pick one idea and commit to do it for the next 4 weeks. If you like it and it saves you money, then make it habit! Once it's a habit, add in another idea – and so on and so forth.

Don't try to radically overhaul your grocery budget overnight. Focus on cutting it by 1-3% every month. It's much more doable and sustainable this way — *and there's a good chance you'll actually stick with it!*

With a little practice, you'll have mad grocery budgeting skills that will maximize the wiggle room in your overall monthly budget. Keep at it, friend. I'm cheering for you!

Here's to a better budget!

*Crystal Paine*