

# Ask an Expert – Five Reasons to Opt Outside on Black Friday

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Although Thanksgiving is typically the kickoff to the holiday shopping season, more and more people are taking a different path. Rather than spending Black Friday in traffic, long lines or in a crowded store, many are choosing to forego the sales and head outdoors instead.

The movement to #OptOutside, started by REI (Recreational Equipment, Inc.) in 2015, invites consumers to spend time outdoors and even provides suggestions on trails and activities in each state. Every Black Friday, REI closes their doors and pays their 13,000+ employees to #OptOutside and make a difference. This year, REI introduced a mission to accompany the movement – the Opt to Act Plan. The mission invites everyone to commit to simple actions to reduce our impact, get active and leave the world better than we found it.

Some may wonder why they should opt to spend time outdoors when the best deals of the season are going on. Consider the following:

1. Many Black Friday deals last longer than just the Friday after Thanksgiving. Check your local ads and stores to see when their sales end. As our society chooses online shopping more and more over department stores, these sales are likely available throughout the months of November and December. To reduce your impact, skip the fastest shipping method, as it is not typically the eco-friendly option.

2. Remember that 50 percent off is still 50 percent on. Sometimes we can get swept up in the excitement of a sale, whether or not it fits within our budget. Determine your wants and needs *before* checking out sales to avoid overspending. Spend time discovering new outdoor activities instead of spending time and money in the store. Consider gifting outdoor experiences for friends and family rather than contributing to the accumulation of “things,” which inevitably leads to unnecessary waste.

3. Spend time with the people you love. Thanksgiving is a time to celebrate an attitude of gratitude. What a perfect way to show it by spending quality time with friends or family in the great outdoors. Whether you choose to go for a walk, play at a local park or enjoy a hike, consider pairing the activity with a [DIY cleanup](#). With a little planning, a cleanup in your community can be an enjoyable and effective way to leave the world better than you found it.

4. You just spent Thanksgiving Day eating. Most families cook and graze on food all day. Participating in physical activity the next day will not only make you feel better (endorphins make us happy!) but it can help kickstart good habits before the New Year. Start your New Year’s resolutions early and [download the Opt to Act Plan](#) – 52 weeks of simple actions that can lead to healthier habits and a better world.

5. Utah is beautiful! In the hustle and bustle of the holidays, sometimes we forget to admire the natural beauty of our state. Utah has 45 state parks and five national parks to explore. To skip the drive and reduce your impact, look for recreational opportunities on your local county website to see what’s available in your area.

To share your own images and adventures on social media, snap a photo and use the #OptOutside hashtag. Perhaps getting out and having an adventure will inspire others to do the same.

## What Next?

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