

Tips and tricks for shopping at estate sales

Shopping at estate sales is a favorite pastime of many folks. Seeing all the strange, wonderful, beautiful and surprising things people collect over their lifetimes is so interesting. Whether you are a pro, or uninitiated into the wonderful world of estate sale shopping, here are some tips and tricks for getting the most out of your experience.

1. **Check out our company website and social media pages.** Most estate sale companies list items, pictures, and videos of upcoming sales online. It's nice to have an idea of some things you want to be on the lookout for at the sale. Our website is www.ChangingSpacesSRS.com and our Facebook page is www.Facebook.com/ChangingSpacesSRS
2. **Be early!** The first people in are going to get first pick on all the best loot. Changing Spaces SRS begins their sales on Fridays at 8:30 a.m. so set your alarm! Changing Spaces SRS begins passing out numbers at 7 a.m. Friday morning, so line up early and bring some coffee to enjoy while you wait. Once the sale opens at 8:30 a.m., the shopper with #1 gets in first, then #2, and so on.
3. **Plan ahead for parking.** There is usually a lot of people in and out of estate sales, so before the sale look up the address beforehand and plan accordingly. Example: if the sale house is located in a cul-de-sac plan to park on a neighboring street. If it looks like parking will be cramped maybe park a block away and leave closer parking for those who can't walk as far.
4. **Be prepared.** If you are on the hunt for furniture it's best to bring a tape measure and have room measurements handy. Looking for end tables? Have the height of the arm rests on your sofa written down. Looking for something to match the living room? Bring paint and/or fabric swatches to ensure you find exactly what you are looking for. Bring a flashlight (or have your phone charged) so you can take a better look at things in the basement, attic, and dimly lit rooms. We always do our best to make sure there is enough lighting, but sometimes some extra light would be handy.
5. **Bring cash.** We accept cash or check only, so expect to not be able to use your debit card for purchases.
6. **Be respectful.** Many estate sales occur because a person has moved into a new living situation or passed away. Either way, it can be an emotional time for families and it can be very hard to see belongings gone through by strangers. While we discourage family from coming to our sales because it can be so difficult, you never know if the person standing next to you is someone's daughter/neighbor/friend, so treat the house and belongings with the respect you would want shown to you and your things.

7. **Bring your own bag.** We will almost always have bags for you to carry your items, but it's always appreciated when people can bring their own. It also ensures you have a sturdy bag for any heavy or oddly shaped items you might find. If you know you are on the hunt for lots of fragile items it's not a bad idea to bring your own bubble wrap too.
8. **Be aware of bargains.** The early bird gets the worm, but the early bird also pays full price and has no room to negotiate. Our sales run Friday and Saturday, with all items discounting 25% Saturday morning (8:30 a.m. to Noon), and 50% Saturday afternoon (Noon to 3:30 p.m.). It's the perfect time to shop on a budget and/or pick up some odds and ends.
9. **Do a quick walkthrough.** You may want to do a quick walkthrough of the entire house. Grab up anything you can't live without on the first walkthrough, but then go back and do a closer inspection of bins, boxes, and closets. There are always some hidden treasures lurking out of view.
10. **Go multiple days.** Go to the estate sale on the first day to grab up those amazing finds you can't walk away from. Make a mental list of items you wouldn't mind paying less for, and come back on the next day to see if anything you wanted is left. It's always a risk, but it can really pay off.
11. **It never hurts to ask.** Find something without a tag? Want to know if the staff can cut you a deal if you want to buy 20 of those vintage posters? Just ask. Setting up for a sale takes a lot of work, and sometimes even the most diligent employee can overlook an item when pricing.
12. **Get on the mailing list.** We have a sign-up sheet for our mailing list at all of our sales. If you don't see it ask a staff member! We send out pictures and information about upcoming sales, so you'll always be in the know.
13. **Bring a friend.** This isn't really a tip to help you find better things, but everything is more fun with a friend! Having an extra set of eyes can also help you find things you might have missed.
14. **Know the rules.** You will be responsible for loading and transporting furniture, so make sure to have a truck and some muscles lined up for helping you transport your amazing finds. Sometimes you can pick up your furniture the next day, sometimes you have to take it with you that same day. Make sure to get all the information you need.
15. **Have fun!** Even if you don't find anything to buy, estate sales are a lot of fun. You get to see the inside of some really neat houses, and check out all the cool stuff!