

Are You a Compulsive Shopper?

The holiday season may have been a stressful time for some of us, but if you are addicted to shopping, the post-holiday bill-paying season can be a downright nightmare. Some signs that you may have a compulsive shopping problem include:

- *Buying items that you do not need,*
- *Hiding items that you buy so that your spouse does not find out,*
- *Hiding credit card bills from your spouse to avoid conflict,*
- *Being unable to pay your other bills because of spending,*
- *You get a “rush” after a purchase.*

If you believe that you may be struggling with a shopping addiction, the first step is to acknowledge the complexity of the problem. There is usually an underlying cause for the compulsive behavior. Some compulsive shoppers suffer from either depression or anxiety; others may feel like they have no control over different aspects of their lives. Others still may feel lonely or angry. One thing they all have in common is when shopping, these uncomfortable feelings are relieved, at least for a moment, with each purchase. This high is usually followed by feelings of shame, guilt and/or the anxiety of being discovered.



The first step in treatment for compulsive shopping is to find the underlying cause. If it is depression or anxiety, these can be treated medically. If it is anger or loneliness, the compulsive shopper can learn positive ways to deal with these feelings. Additionally, in treatment, the compulsive shopper will learn ways to control the behavior by avoiding triggers like “window shopping” or boredom. Groups are also available and helpful; a well-known one is [Debtors Anonymous](#), they have meetings in 15 countries as well as online. Shopping is a necessary part of life, so abstinence is unrealistic. Through groups, however, compulsive shoppers can learn tips and tricks from other shopaholics to avoid binges. The best type of treatment is different for everyone. If you think that you might have a shopping addiction, give us a call as The Holman Group is here to help!

An EAP counselor is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for emergency and urgent assistance. To schedule an appointment, receive a community referral or for inquires our office is open 7:30 am to 6:30 pm PST.

