



## CreatingHours

Time Management Tips & Tricks for Busy Parents: Creating an Abundance of Time for the People and Things we Value Most!

### 30 Practical Ways to Save Time

1. Tie shoes in a way that does not require constant re-tying throughout the day! Cross the laces and wrap one lace around the other, and then pull snugly. Then form a loop with one lace and pinch it between your thumb and forefinger. Next, wrap the second lace around the loop once. Normally, at this point you would poke a section of that second lace through the hole you just made at the base of the loop. For the variation that never gets untied, instead of wrapping the second lace around the loop only once, wrap it around that loop twice. Then resume tying in the usual manner. Unlike double-knots, untying this knot is as easy as can be- simply pull on one free end of a lace!
2. Plan your errands in a clockwise route around town, so that you are constantly making right turns, which are faster than left turns. (Go counterclockwise in the UK and AU!) Avoid crisscrossing across town, which is the slowest way to get around.
3. Use non-stick spray to grease your baking pans and pots before heavy usage. Do this for your crock pot before using it and you'll save yourself valuable time and elbow grease in the cleanup process!
4. Redo your answering-machine. In actuality answering-machines are misnamed; they are really question-collectors! Every time you pick up a message and hear, "Hi, this is Jane, call me back," you must make an additional phone call to figure out what Jane had wanted. Instead of saying, "Hi, you have reached Ellen Braun, please leave a message," record a new message to the effect of: "Hi, this is Ellen Braun. Please state the reason for your call and how I can best help you." Prestro! You'll have half the amount of phone calls as people will say things like, "Hi Ellen, I want to know if I can borrow that blue fruit bowl," and you can send an email or text the person, "I'm sorry, that bowl has cracked," or, "Sure, I'll leave it in a paper bag on my porch for you."
5. Never, ever save a paper when duplicate information can be found online. A Citibank bill that is available when you log into Citibank's site should never be saved! Same with emails- a receipt from BestBuy that is available by logging into BestBuy's site should be deleted! (You may want to verify that the online information is the same as your paper information prior to taking out the trash.) Reward: Less papers and emails to clutter up your life and slow you down.
6. Activate the single click option (Windows) on my computer - why waste time on all those unnecessary double-clicks? Tools -> Folders -> Single-click to open an item.
7. Create a standard system for storing and retrieving your passwords. My system goes something like this: The site's first and last letter, my hometown and old phone number, the sites last and first letter. (Security experts advise changing passwords every 6 months and



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not using the same one for each site. In 6 months, instead of my hometown and phone number, I'll use my college town and zip code, still using the site's first and last letters.)

8. You can't concentrate when flies are buzzing around your face. Turn off all programs and windows that are not essential to your project while working on the computer. Having Facebook or an email program open in the background will cause distracting buzzing to interfere with your focus and slow you down.
9. Prepare a master grocery list that corresponds to the aisles of your local shop. (Or ask an organized friend to email hers to you!) Keep copies on the fridge, and circle the items you need for your next shopping expedition. No more last-minute errands for things you forgot, and no need to sit and write out a shopping list each week! This tip has personally saved me hours each week.
10. Chill a bottle of wine or a can of soda super quickly by putting them in a bucket of salty ice water. A bottle of wine will chill in six minutes this way, and a can of soda will chill in just two minutes! The salt reduces the freezing point of the water and lets you refresh your guests quicker!
11. Cooking oil and substances like that can be a pain to clean up when spilled on the floor. Make a much easier time of it by tossing a little bit of flour on the spill and letting it soak up the oil before you clean it up. You'll be scrubbing a lot less!
12. Splattered raw eggs are no fun to clean up on the counter or floor. Sprinkle salt on the egg mess, which will cause the liquid to solidify a bit, and your job will go faster!
13. Prepare dinner in the morning in a crock-pot. Buy an extra crock-pot for soups. This way you'll have a hearty soup and tasty main dish awaiting you at the end of a hard day's work. Quick preparation, no worries about burning dinner, stirring, mixing, etc. Especially useful when you'll be out of the house all day.
14. Go through your house, room by room, and get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful, or joyful. Set the timer for 10 minutes per room. Put everything into boxes in the garage. Give yourself a few months to decide if you want to trash, save, donate, or sell these items. You'll save time: Not having to wash, maintain or dust these things. They won't hinder your access to important items you need in a hurry.
15. Do less laundry by teaching your kids which clothes might be worn more than once before being washed - like the outfit they only wore for a few hours to the school Open House. Have a special place in their room to hang "ABW" clothes. The kids will love it if you call them that, like "ABC" gum - "already been chewed". Totally grosses us moms out, but, will help them remember your system!
16. Save time cleaning your kids' rooms and teach them a great lesson about the importance of giving! Offer to pay each child say \$1 for 20 items that they donate to the Goodwill or local shelter. The kids will be excited to clean out their rooms and earn money and they will also



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feel good about themselves for donating things to others in need. And you won't have to deal with the hassle of getting them to clean their rooms.

17. When it's time to launder linens, and you're folding it and putting it all away, take an entire sheet set, pillowcases included, and put it all neatly inside one of its own pillowcases. That way, next time you go to change the sheets on the bed, you won't spend so much time digging through all of the linens for the whole sheet set. Sweet!
18. Leave a couple of trash bags at the bottom of the can. This is helpful when you have wastepaper baskets and trash cans in various places around the house. When you do your rounds to empty them all, it's easy to replace the liner when they are close by.
19. Buy in large quantity. Then, label the inside of your pantry door with what's inside, and cross off each time you use an item. For example, when you buy a dozen cans of tuna, write "12 tuna cans" on a paper taped to the inside of the cabinet door. When you make sandwiches later, and use 2 cans, cross off the 12 and replace with a 10. You'll never run out of your favorite foods or toiletries again!
20. Why touch clothing twice- once to put it away, and once to get it ready to be worn? Buy several hanging sweater organizers, available at Target, Wal-Mart, etc. and put away your clothing in groups- each shelf should contain pants, shirt, underwear, socks. This way, when it's time to get dressed, you grab one shelf instead of opening 5 drawers to find what you need. Exceptionally helpful for children.
21. Never call a customer service department or appliance repairman on Mondays- that is the day you'll be placed on hold the longest, as all weekend issues are addressed on Mondays.
22. Save time shopping for and choosing gifts by stocking up on gender-neutral, quality gifts when they are on sale. Dark cashmere scarves, fine wines and pens are a few gifts that everyone will appreciate for any occasion! Designate one place for storage of stashed gifts.
23. Dust never stops accumulating, but it is time-consuming to gather your Pledge and rags each time you notice a few specks of dust. On the other hand, you do not want to keep your dusting supplies on hand in every room of the house. Lotion Tissues to the rescue! These beautifully designed boxes look terrific in any location and the lotion inside of the tissue fibers will absorb dust on contact!
24. Save empty plastic Oreo cookie trays and wooden Clementine crates to organize your kitchen shelves and drawers. The small compartments make storing and finding tiny items a breeze, and there's no need to scrub these organizers when they get grimy or crumbly- just toss and install a new one!
25. Tape up little check lists around the house to remind kids (or yourself) of the quick-and-easy-but-often-forgotten tasks that need to be done. For example, in the bathroom, turn the faucet all the way off, close toilet seat, turn off light. If your children are too young to read,



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make simple illustrations. Laminate the lists that will go in the kitchen and bathroom so they are not ruined by splashing water!

26. Buy or decorate large baskets that match the décor of its room. In the living room, you may use wicker baskets; in the bedrooms you can cover a basket with fabric that matches the curtains. Use these baskets as a “catch-all” to keep the rooms neat, and go through the baskets at set intervals. This way, stuff that is lying around, whose place has not yet been determined, does not contribute to a cluttered look or block access to important items!
27. Own nothing that is broken. If your tweezers is dull, your son’s bicycle has been run over by a truck, or your hairdryer has stopped blowing hot air- throw it out! Broken utensils sap time and energy as we search for the flashlight that still works and attempt for the 100th time to coax the broken appliance back to life. If it is not worth taking to a repair shop, it is not worth taking up molecules of space in your home!
28. Just get started! I once read a story about a team of construction workers who had to move a huge boulder. They worked for hours, but it would not budge, so they decided to call it quits for the day, complaining that they were drained of energy. Just then, one guy’s crowbar moved the boulder a few inches! All four construction men dropped their keys and got back to work with renewed energy until the boulder had been moved out of the way! Sometimes, when we feel tired, just starting a project and seeing a bit of positive moment will give us the mental fortitude to continue working productively.
29. Whoever said, “If it’s worth doing at all, it’s worth doing well,” probably had very little accomplishments to show for herself. Perfection is the ENEMY of progress! Do it well, and if you choose to do so, go back and perfect it later. You can cut a diamond this afternoon and polish it for all of eternity, but if you are never satisfied with its luster then you will never move on to cut the next diamond. Expediency outdoes perfection.
30. When you buy new clothing that requires a matching top or bottom, snip off a thread from inside a seam and tape to index card, to match while shopping. This way you won’t have to return to the mall to exchange that salmon-colored sweater you thought would match those rose-colored slacks!

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