

Getting Out the Door

How do you leave the house in the morning? Are you calm? Are you able to quickly pick up the things you need as you go out the door? Or do you run around, frantically trying to remember where you put your keys last night and forgetting your lunch on the kitchen counter?

If you have children, or need to coordinate with other people leaving the house, the difficulties are multiplied, sometimes exponentially!

So what can help you get out the door with the minimum of fuss and maximum of efficiency? I heard of one woman who was able to get her and her children out the door in 25 minutes in the morning - that's efficiency. I confess, I like to have more time in the morning to do a few things around the house before I leave.

So what do you need to do to make it easier on yourself? Ask yourself what it would be like to leave calmly. What sorts of things would you do? What amount of time do you need to leave for various tasks? What things could you do ahead of time?

Here are some ideas if you are stuck.

The night before:

- Set out clothes, including ironing them if necessary
- Prepare lunches, or at least gather together any uncut items - whole fruit, carrot sticks, cheese sticks, crackers, etc. - and put them in their containers or baggies.
- Gather any items you will need for the next day- homework, permission slips, items for running errands, meeting materials, etc. - and put them in your bag/briefcase near the door.

The morning of:

- Get up a few minutes earlier
- Set a timer to finish reading the newspaper or fixing your hair (or any activity that causes delay in the morning).
- Have a schedule so you know when to get up, when to finish your shower, when you should be dressed by, when you need to have finished breakfast, and so on so that you can leave on time. Kids can also use a "get ready" chart; use photos or drawings for the little ones.

When you return home:

- Put your keys in a designated spot right by the door as you come in the door (that way they'll be there when you need to leave again).
- Leave your sunglasses and wallet there too, or if that is not practical, have another spot where you always go to put them down.
- Put your cell phone on to charge if necessary

Remember that a new routine has to be established as a routine. To start with, when you change your routine, you may need to consciously remind yourself to change your routine. You may need to put up little reminder notes for yourself, or set alarms. Discuss your new plan with others in your household so they can support you and work with you while you establish your new routine.