



Managing Your Time

Fitting Festivities into the Every day

Holiday Time Management

Every day life is already pretty busy. It's a rare day when I have "nothing to do." As Calvin and Hobbes say, "The days are just packed."

But if we're feeling busy on a regular day, how much more so do we feel during the holiday season?

There's a hustle and bustle that can be contagious, particularly when you're sitting in rush-hour traffic, horns blaring in the distance, and a light drizzle causing the windshield wipers to go "swish, swish," while the toddler whines, "Hungry!" and your brain runs a mile a minutes trying to figure out HOW you will ever get home in time to cook supper, change clothes, find the baby's Christmas outfit, bake up those cookies you promised you'd bring, and get to the church in time.

Most certainly, a deer in the headlights moment.

And yet, there are so many wonderful, enriching things we can add to the mix between Thanksgiving and New Year's: light looking, tree trimming, story reading, caroling, baking, and simply spending time

together, remembering good things of Christmases past.

If we're not careful, though, we can easily overdo and overcommit.

Successful time management is key to celebrating a simpler season.

In these pages are some quick tips, calendars, and planning pages to help fit the festivities into your every day.

Quick Tips for Holiday Time Management.

- Keep track of the days. Consult your calendar every day so that you're aware of upcoming events. If there are no blank spaces, you may need to say no to a few good things to give you and your family some breathing space. Print the following calendars to make sure you have a bird's eye view of the days ahead.
- Determine how long a project/dinner party/event will take to prepare for and then walk backward on the calendar, making sure you start with plenty of time in advance. There are few things that you can really start too early, so don't procrastinate. If you finish with time to spare, then enjoy the moment. Stressing about a project is usually worse than just tackling it.
- [Build a time budget](#) that's specific for the holiday season so that you're not attempting more than humanly possible. Know your limits and don't go past them. There are only 24 hours in a day. Really.
- Create a master to do list with all your plans and goals in one place. Note how you've delegated certain tasks. (And yes, get help wherever possible.) There's a printable form included here to get you started.

- Keep up with daily routines so that you don't get buried under clutter and dirty clothes. Use the following daily "to do" list if you don't already have a system in place that you love. A quick fifteen-minute pickup where all family members chip in can do wonders for your home.
- Plan for the unexpected. Leave fifteen minutes earlier for an event. Allow for margin in your day. Things will come up. If you have a little "extra" time already planned, you'll be better equipped to absorb those delays.

While we can't plan for every contingency, we can think through the things that we know will come up. You won't pull off a perfect Christmas, but Lord willing, you will celebrate a simpler season.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is a small black mark at the top left corner, possibly a staple or a piece of tape. The paper appears to be from a notebook or a set of legal pads.

What's most important today:

To do

To bake/cook/thaw

To buy

Special Events

a simpler
season

November 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

a simpler
season

December 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 	26	27	28	29	30	31 



Looking for other ways to slow down and celebrate a simpler season?

Visit [Life as MOM](#) throughout the coming months for a range of ideas as well as “grab and go” recipes, gift ideas, and family fun. As long as you have a computer, a printer, and some paper, I’ve got you covered.

Together we'll:

- [Plan ahead for a simpler season](#)
- [Think through the holidays](#) and reflect on Christmases past
- [Count our blessings](#) and practice thankfulness
- Make the days count with holiday time management
- Keep the kids happy while the turkey cooks
- Countdown until Christmas with easy family fun
- Bake someone happy — in a simpler way
- Plan to have fun and make memories
- Wrap presents in style without a lot of stress
- Create a simple and inexpensive gift for children
- Get supper in the bag
- Serve a make-ahead Christmas breakfast
- Ring in the New Year with kids

Don't miss a bit of the fun! You can [subscribe for free emails](#) or [get LifeasMOM in your feed reader](#) each morning

This series is brought to you, in part, by:



About the Author

Jessica Fisher is a busy mom of six young children, aged toddler to teen. (Homeschool) mom by day, she moonlights as a freelance writer, blogger, and cookbook author.



Published in over 85 regional parenting publications, Jessica enjoys writing for periodicals as well as the web. She writes about ways to manage a home and family and still keep a smile on your face at LifeasMOM.com and posts “delicious ways to act your wage” at [Good Cheap Eats](http://GoodCheapEats.com). She is a regular contributor on [Life Your Way](http://LifeYourWay.com) and [Simple Homeschool](http://SimpleHomeschool.com). Her writing has also been featured on [5 Dollar Dinners](http://5DollarDinners.com), [Money Saving Mom](http://MoneySavingMom.com), [Organizing Junkie](http://OrganizingJunkie.com), and [Simple Mom](http://SimpleMom.com).

Jessica is the author of a forthcoming cookbook in the *Not Your Mother's* series, published by the Harvard Common Press. She has also authored a number of ebooks, including [Organizing Life as MOM](#), [Summer Survival Guide](#), and [FishMama's Guide to Cooking with Children](#).

For more information about Jessica, go to Fishmama.com or visit her at either of her two blogs, LifeasMOM.com and GoodCheapEats.com