

Set Yourself Up For Success: The Night Before

Day after day, I fought the same battles as a Stay At Home Mom (SAHM). I felt like I was making no progress. And honestly, I was seriously questioning how well of a job I was doing when most of my day I felt stressed-out and rushed.

One day, though, I stopped and noticed that I had set myself up for stress and failure in many ways.

* I consistently put off doing dishes after dinner. I always kicked myself the next morning when I walked into the kitchen to see the mess.
* I stayed up late to try to have some personal time. It left me drained the next morning.
* I never had a plan for the mornings. I was half-awake and in “survival mode.”

I was feeling like the household and I were unpredictable. I really didn’t like how I was doing my job as a SAHM. I was setting myself up to fail. Can you relate?

Here, I will explain my most effective strategy for Setting My(Your)self Up For Success. I am going to lessen the learning curve for you so that you can jump right from wherever you are now to consistently successful days. The added benefit of Setting Yourself Up for Success is that you are taking SAHMcare of yourself in the process.

**Here's how you'll know you've gained something worthwhile from this hand-out:**

1. You feel relieved that there are useful methods out there for Stay At Home Moms.
2. You can name one thing that you can easily begin doing tonight that will make tomorrow run smoother.
3. You acknowledge that even if you don’t feel like it at the end of the day, spending the time in the evenings to prepare for tomorrow is a gift to yourself.

**It all begins the Night Before**

There is a very special time each day when I am super-good to myself. It's the time when I make my life so much easier. It's called "The Night Before" and it's at this time of that day that I begin to Set Myself Up for Success.

I created a Night Before Routine that has a 100% success rate. First, I started small. These are the 3 tasks that I started to do the night before that made my days much easier: Laundry, Kitchen Cleanup, and Laying out Clothes.

I decided to sort the laundry in the evenings, bundle them by load, then put one load in the washing machine to start in the morning. I even moved the dials on the washer to the settings I wanted. That was pretty simple, and it helped. (10-15 minutes)

Next, I tackled the thing that I like doing the least: having the kitchen completely cleaned – dishes, countertops, and all. I don't like doing it, but if I decide not to do it, it's like I start the following day off wrong. I think, "Why didn't I do that last night?" I know I can do better than this. (20-30 minutes, depending on the state of the kitchen. Why so long? I have three kids under 5!)

So once I started getting the hang of throwing in a load of laundry for the morning and keeping the kitchen cleaned up, I added setting my clothes out for the next day. (2.5 minutes) When I started doing these three tasks, it was like my household was redefined. Also, I had a little confidence boost because I was being really nice to myself for a change.

**Here's my Night Before routine:**

So, after a year of using this strategy, here’s how it’s successfully developed over time for me:

1. While my husband has the kids in the bathtub, I **lay out all of their pjs, underwear/diapers**. Then, I **lay out their clothes for the next day**.
2. I go to my room and **get out my clothes for the next day**, too.
3. Depending on whose hamper is getting fullest, I **sort the laundry** in that hamper. What works for me is to use one of the bigger pieces of clothing/sheets/blankets as a “laundry bag” for that load by bundling all same-colored/type items together. This keeps things separate. I take the loads down to the laundry room and **put a load of sorted laundry in the washing machine**.
4. Next, I **load the dishwasher**, put in the detergent, and set the delay timer for 3 hours.
5. I put any dishes that have to be hand washed into a hot, soapy sink to let them soak.
6. Upstairs to help get pjs on and read to the kids. **Tuck kids in bed.**
7. Back downstairs to **finish kitchen cleanup** – washing dishes left to soak first (including drying and putting away). Then wipe off countertops and sweep floor. Trash goes out.

**Creating your Night Before routine**

To begin, pick one thing that you can do tonight when you get home to make tomorrow easier. Here are some ideas to inspire you!

Insider Tip: Go to bed at a decent time tonight. If you do this, you will have enough energy for tomorrow, and your hard work will pay off!

**Have you gotten anything useful from this?**

By doing your Night Before routine, you are setting yourself up for success and working smarter as a SAHM. You consistently do this as a gift to yourself, as a way to take care of yourself. Remember: this is how you USUALLY do it, not how you RARELY do it.

If you can pinpoint at least one thing that you can easily begin doing tonight that will make tomorrow run smoother, then you’ve gotten your money’s worth. Anytime you intentionally orchestrate success in your household, you are adding value to the family and to yourself. After implementing these strategies, I see SAHMs more relaxed. I hear them say that they have more control over the success of their days than they thought was possible.

Before you know it, you'll consistently be successful, too. Remember, though, it all begins The Night Before.