

How to Create a

Homeschooling Schedule

Ten Practical Steps to Help You Manage Your Time

by Anne Elliott

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*“She watches over the affairs of her household
and does not eat the bread of idleness.”
Proverbs 31:27*

About the Author

Anne Elliott has been a mother for sixteen years and a wife for nineteen years. This next year, Anne will be homeschooling a 10th grade son, an 8th grade daughter, a 7th grade son, a 5th grade daughter, a 2nd grade daughter, and a kindergarten-aged daughter. She also has a preschool-age son. (Did we mention her black lab, Penny, and her cat, Mocha and Tiger?)

When she’s not busy with her children, Anne is working with her husband, a pastor of a Baptist church in southern Minnesota. She also owns several websites for women, with advice on living a godly life, marriage, parenting, health and more. Anne is the published author of a book for women titled [*Juggling Life’s Responsibilities: Biblical Help for the Married Woman*](#), a parenting book titled [*The Four Foundations of Lifelong Learning: Preparing Your Little Ones for School*](#), and several [homeschooling curricula](#).

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Are you wanting to set up a homeschooling schedule? Are you looking for a schedule that's ready-made for you and your family? Do you feel like "a mother's work is never done"?

We're here to help! Here are ten practical steps to help you manage your time as a homeschooling mom:

1. Rise early in the morning.

The first step in setting up and sticking to a homeschooling schedule is making sure you get up in the morning. It's fine to have occasional days when everyone is allowed to sleep in, but as a general rule, you'll all feel much better if you get up.

When to get up...

Just a little before sunrise is a great time for mom to wake up. It's still a little dark, and it's usually very quiet. You'll have a few moments of quiet before the busyness of the day begins.

What to do...

Take a quick shower, brush your teeth and grab a cup of coffee, then slip away to a quiet spot with your Bible. Get directions from the Holy Spirit on how He wants you to use your time today. Bring your worries and concerns to Him in prayer. Bring your "to do" list to Him, too! He will direct you, and you'll know you're doing exactly what He wants you to with your time.

“This is the beginning of a new day. God has given me this day to use as I will. I can waste it - or use it for good, but what I do today is important, because I am exchanging a day of my life for it! When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever, leaving in its place something that I have traded for it. I want it to be gain, and not loss; good, and not evil; success, and not failure; in order that I shall not regret the price I have paid for it.”

~Author Unknown

2. Eat regular meals.

Mealtime is fairly non-negotiable in our home. For our health and for more even-keeled emotions (we do have five females in this house, after all!), our bodies need to have regular rhythms.

- ❖ Nothing helps set up a steady circadian rhythm better than regular mealtimes and regular bedtimes.
- ❖ Regular mealtimes also help us do our chores regularly (dishes, especially).
- ❖ Finally, regular mealtimes ensure that I set my own interests aside for a few minutes each day and enjoy my companions and show interest in them during mealtime.

3. Follow a plan.

Make an “everything I do” list. On one sheet of paper, list every single thing you normally do in a week. (It may take several days before you remember all these things, so take your time!)

Get your husband’s input. Ask him if your “everything I do” list is missing anything. Ask him what you should remove from your list. (Hey, what a great excuse for a date!)

Prioritize your list so that you know what things you **MUST** do each day, what things you would **LIKE** to do, and what things you **DON’T** have to do.

“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.”

Ephesians 5:15-17

In the front of my planning notebook, I have a “Daily To Do” list which tells me what I must do each day so I can reach my goals. Each morning, I can glance at this list and work through it, one step at a time.

1. Have I read my Bible?
2. Have I had a shower (and prayer time)?
3. Am I dressed for the day?
4. Are the kids dressed?
5. Are the beds made?
6. Is the house neat?
7. Have we had a nutritious breakfast?
8. Is the kitchen clean?
9. Have I done my daily cleaning chores?
10. Have I planned the day’s meals?
11. Have I done schoolwork with the kids?
12. Am I prepared for church and ministry commitments?
13. Have I written encouraging notes to people who need them?
14. Etc.

Make a weekly cycle for cleaning, budgeting jobs, shopping, laundry, music lessons, sports activities, church commitments, dates with your husband and children, and rest times.

Great Worksheets:

<http://melissaringstaff.blogspot.com/2009/04/homeschool-freebie.html>

Other schedules and helps online:

- ❖ <http://www.titus2.com/m-more-info.htm>
- ❖ <http://www.cindysdesktop.com/?cat=65>
- ❖ <http://cindyushton.com/category/articles/scheduling/>
- ❖ <http://www.donnayoung.org/forms/help/schetips.htm>
- ❖ http://homeschooling.about.com/od/scheduling/Homeschool_Scheduling_Helps.htm
- ❖ http://homeschooling.about.com/od/schedulingforms/Homeschool_Scheduling_Forms.htm

4. Be a manager of your home.

Face it. You're the mom. You're not your children's buddy or playmate. You're their mom. It's your job to love them, but it's also your job to teach them. Not only should you set up a homeschooling schedule. You also need to enforce the schedule in your home.

“Don't expect what you won't inspect!”

Ideas:

- ❖ If you have a difficult time getting your children to do a GOOD job on their kitchen chores (rather than rushing through them so they can get back to their fun), try this...

Post a list of what you expect during kitchen clean-up. You could tape the list to the inside of a cabinet door. Detail every job that needs to be done before the kids may leave the kitchen. For instance,

- clear your own spot
- help clear the rest of table
- wipe the table
- put on the tablecloth and centerpiece
- vacuum under the table
- push the chairs in
- sweep the kitchen floor
- wipe off counters
- wash dishes
- dry dishes
- put away dishes
- wipe off stove
- shine sink

Maybe your kids aren't lazy after all. Maybe they just don't know what's expected of them! (By the way, this idea works for any cleaning job.)

- ❖ Laminate your schedule and hang it on the refrigerator. Each day, use a dry erase marker and check off each activity as you complete it. At the end of the morning, you can easily see what has or hasn't been completed. Wipe it off with a paper towel to use the next day. You'll enjoy not having to remember everything in your head anymore, and your children will enjoy knowing "what's next."
- ❖ I keep a calendar white board on my refrigerator also. All our appointments and responsibilities get written on this family calendar. We all know where to look when we want to know what's happening.
- ❖ Place an alarm clock in the kitchen, and set it for a specific time each day. When the alarm goes off, Mom does a "house inspection." Be sure your children know exactly what your standards are, then force yourself to actually check their work at this daily time. Be consistent with rewards or consequences. I like to have "house inspection" time in the late afternoon, before Daddy gets home, so that the house looks nice for his return.

5. Change activities before you get tired.

Mom, admit it! It can be exhausting to be a mom AND a homeschooling teacher.

Studies have shown that your brain will recover quicker from the intensity of your days if you'll take frequent breaks. Have you been reading aloud for an hour? Stop and take a quick walk outside. Have you been online too long? Get up and do the dishes. Have you been on your feet awhile? Take ten minutes to lie down and listen to music.

Often, we moms will forget about taking care of ourselves. If you must, set a timer to remind yourself to take a break at least once each hour. You'll be amazed how much more energetic you feel!

6. Set up your school space.

My house isn't big enough to actually have one room that's exclusively devoted to school (although that would be *wonderful* someday). However, we still have "school space."

We do our school at the dining room table (and my husband prefers that it look like a dining room, not a kindergarten classroom, at the end of the day).

To help us do school consistently AND to keep the house neat, we keep our schoolwork in crates that are easily carried to the dining room each morning after chore time. At the end of the school day, the crates are returned to a closet. If a child prefers to read or do independent schoolwork on the couch, outside, or in his bedroom, the crate can easily be carried there.

Other school supplies have "homes" as well. Bookshelves, old dressers, filing cabinets, and extra cupboards are all good choices.

When there's a "place for everything and everything in its place," you'll be relieved of a lot of the pressure of homeschooling.

7. Have a consistent, regular school time.

No one ever said that school had to be fancy in order to be effective. Each year, I brainstorm a "wish list" for our homeschooling year. I put this list in the front cover of my homeschooling binder.

But in reality, there are only a few necessities that MUST be done each day:

- ❑ I read¹ to them daily (including God's Word²).
- ❑ They write in a journal daily.³
- ❑ We use a good math program.⁴
- ❑ They do phonics or grammar daily (just 1 or 2 pages).⁵
- ❑ They have assigned, independent reading for subjects such as history and science.⁶

These are the basics. We do these daily. We're consistent.

Very few things prevent us from doing school, but you'll also notice that these few things won't overwhelm us.

I do occasional unit studies, too. Once in a while, we do extra science projects. Now and then, we'll have an art lesson. Each child's individual work includes some extra things, but sometimes these don't get done.

However, if we do the basics, day in and day out, consistently, I can be sure my children are getting a solid education.

8. Plan things for the little ones.

The younger the child, the more she needs a consistent schedule in order to feel relaxed and secure.

Get some easy ideas on my blog, at <http://anneelliott.com/blog/?p=329>.

¹ <http://anneelliott.com/blog/?p=397>

² <http://homeschoolingbible.com/>

³ <http://anneelliott.com/blog/?p=386>

⁴ <http://anneelliott.com/blog/?p=195>

⁵ <http://anneelliott.com/blog/?p=388>

⁶ <http://annesschoolplace.com/werecommend.shtml>

9. Take domestic shortcuts.

You know, if you really think about it, being a homeschool mom is a bit like being a working mom. Rather than being gone at the office all day, you're involved in teaching math and reading. But you're very busy, nonetheless!

Why not relax some of your housekeeping standards during this season of your life? I'm not saying that you should never do laundry or clean the dog hair off the floor.

However, do you really need to dust seven days a week? Do you need to iron your pajamas?

Experiment with your cleaning routines until you find a happy "middle ground" that is acceptable to you and your husband. Then delegate at least half of those jobs to your children!

Don't try to be a superwoman.

10. Rest

Finally, remember that God has ordained times of rest for us. We're only human, "made of dust," and He wisely commanded that we rest each night and each week.

What time do you go to bed each night? Doctors tell us that our bodies recharge between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m., so aim to be in bed by 10:00 p.m. (If you don't believe me, keep a diary of how you feel on the "day after" going to bed late. Compare this to how you feel when you get plenty of rest.)

Also, be sure to take one day each week to completely rest and worship God. For 24 hours, remind yourself that it's God-ordained for you to NOT cook, NOT clean, and NOT hoe the garden.

http://avirtuouswoman.ning.com/notes/What_the_Sabbath_Means_to_Me

Resources for You

Bible Curriculum:

Foundations 1: Preparation for Christ

Foundations 2: Christ Our Messiah

Foundations 3: Christ Our Hope

Juggling Life's Responsibilities: Biblical Help for the Married Woman

The Four Foundations of Lifelong Learning: Preparing Your Little Ones for School

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