

Get Rid of Manic Mornings; Adopt a Calm Morning Routine

By [Denise Witmer](#), About.com

Setting kids to school on time, fed and ready while you need to get ready for your day is a monumental task. Completing it and staying calm can seem impossible. I can tell you that before our family adopted a morning routine, manic mornings were our norm. Everyone going in separate directions, things were being forgotten and no one had a smile on their face while they ran out of the door towards the day ahead. Then I decided to get our act together and I'm proud to say that the calm morning routine is what most of our mornings are like now. Here are a few tips on how I did it:

Anything that can be prepared the night before, should be. If you're offering cereal for breakfast, get the cereal, bowls and spoons out and on the counter. Check the weather, let everyone know what it will be and choose an appropriate outfit. Every once in a while ask your teen what he/she will be wearing. While you don't want to bug him/her, you do want to model this good behavior and take an interest in his/her decision making skills.

Your children, including your teen, should have their backpacks packed and ready to go. Lunch money, homework, pencils, etc. should all be ready the night before. Depending on your teen's maturity level, check or have him/her check their weekly schedule. Does he/she have gym or band the next day? Get this stuff ready too. Being ready the night before will save the last minute scramble time that will frustrate your teen, possibly make him/her late and not set a good tone to start the new day.

Make time for breakfast. It serves as a healthy way to start the day both physically and emotionally for the whole family. Talk to your family about what they would like to have for breakfast. Make this time quality family time.

Get enough rest the night before. This goes for everyone in the household. There really is no way to get your family's morning routine together if you aren't getting enough rest.

Model a positive attitude about the upcoming day. The more you moan and groan about your boss and co-workers or the project you're working on the more your children will learn to moan and groan about their teachers and their next math test. Life isn't always peachy - that's a fact - but having a positive attitude about doing things that aren't easy is half the struggle. You can give your teen this lesson daily every morning, without the lecture, just by doing it.

Say things like, "I'm looking forward to finishing ____ today." Then ask your teen if there is anything he/she is looking forward to in the day ahead. Everyday conversations with your teen count towards keeping the lines of communication open.

Get out of bed 15 minutes before the kids do. Start your morning routine or have a cup of coffee. Give yourself some quiet time before the rush of everyone else getting ready and needing your attention. This 'me time' does wonders for those of us who take a little time to wake up.

Have your children help with morning tasks. Does the dog need to go out? Your 10-year-old can handle that. Delegate some of the morning responsibilities so that the pace of your morning isn't so hectic you forget to tell your children you love them as they walk out of the door.

Finally, finish your morning routine with a loving goodbye, complete with hug if your teen will let you. Here is a perfect time to strengthen your loving foundation and family bonds.