

Think "Fit", Not "Fast"

Modern Inconveniences

-- By Liza Barnes, Health Educator for SparkPeople

You stare at your to-do list with dread: *Unload the dishwasher, return the library books, do the laundry, pick up dinner, drop the kids off at the mall, go to the gym...*and that's just the beginning. The list seems endless and unfortunately, your time is not.

The good news is that one simple change has the ability to shorten your list, save you money, improve your health, bring your family closer together, and conserve resources—all at the same time!

Instead of using modern technology to do things the **fast way**, try doing things the **fit way**. By shunning modern conveniences in favor of the old-fashioned methods, you'll find endless calorie-burning potential! While the **fast way** may seem more efficient, think of the **fit way** as a way to combine your goals. In essence, you'll be getting more things done at once, so you'll check off that to-do list with ease. If you're so used to the fast way that you've forgotten that there IS another way, start with these alternatives:

Fast Way: Drive through the car wash.

Fit Way: Wash your car with a sponge and a bucket of suds.

In just 30 minutes, you can make your car sparkle and burn about **140 calories** too. If you want to get your kids involved, bring out some extra sponges and let them scrub and rinse with you. There's no guarantee anyone will stay dry, but the chances are good that you'll have fun. If you don't have a place to wash your car (not everyone has a driveway), there are lots of do-it-yourself coin carwashes that will do the trick.

Fast Way: Drive to the supermarket, cleaners, or video store.

Fit Way: Walk, jog, or ride your bike to your destination.

If you only have a few things to pick up or drop off, take a backpack and use non-polluting "people power" to get there. You'll burn calories, get a workout while running errands, and reduce fuel expenses and wear and tear on your car.

Fast Way: Pick up dinner at the local carry-out.

Fit Way: Cook dinner yourself.

In just 15-45 minutes you can whip up an amazing dinner with lots of healthy veggies and whole grains, and you can burn at least **126 calories** while you're at it. If you have kids, get them involved. They're great at measuring, mixing, and setting the table—plus learning how to cook wholesome foods will set them up for a lifetime of healthy eating habits.

Fast Way: Load the dishwasher and push start.

Fit Way: Wash your dishes by hand.

Before you run away screaming, listen to this: Just 30 minutes of dishwashing burns **70 calories!** Get your family involved for a great opportunity for conversation; if you're solo, turn on some music and make it fun. With you powering the scrubbers, you'll save money on your electric bill and extend the lifetime of your dishwasher too.

Fast Way: Drop the kids off at the mall so you can go to the gym.

Fit Way: Go for a hike together.

This substitution packs more than fat-burning power. You'll bond with your kids, get closer to nature, and fill your lungs with fresh, clean oxygen to boot. Plus you'll burn almost **400 calories** an hour. At that rate, you can just cross the gym off of your list for the day.

Fast Way: Use a leaf blower (or hire a lawn service to rake those leaves).

Fit Way: Jump into your self-raked leaf pile.

When raking leaves torches **126 calories** per half hour, why would you pay someone to work out for you?

Fast Way: Dry your clothes in the dryer.

Fit Way: Hang your laundry out to dry.

Next time you're at the supermarket, take a walk down the laundry aisle. You'll see a plethora of "outdoor" scents like mountain fresh, summer breeze, and spring rain, all to make your laundry smell as if it actually *was* dried in

the fresh air. If you go for the genuine scent by actually hanging your clothes out to dry, you'll burn calories, save on energy consumption, and save money by skipping the dryer sheets.

These are just some ideas to get you started. "Thinking fit" will burn more calories, save you money, and may even improve your relationships. Chances are, you might even have fun with these fit alternatives, or at the very least, gain an appreciation for how easy you really have it. **Think fit, not fast!**