

Real Solutions is a periodic newsletter produced by Susan Stewart designed to provide practical organization tips to simplify your life.

Relieve Vacation Stress by Planning Ahead

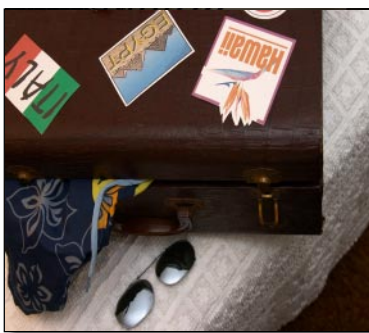
Cindy looks at the calendar and sighs. Ah, the end of May. What a busy time! Memorial Day is just around the corner and the package for her mom for Mother's day is still sitting on her bedroom floor. There are graduations to attend, parties to plan and vacations to pack for. The thought of getting away for a family vacation brings a smile to her face, but preparing her family for that trip is another story.

The night before their trip Cindy is in a dazed panic. She has a huge pile of laundry and she is just beginning to pack. Three year old Megan is a huge help... as Cindy puts things in the suitcase, Megan takes them out.

Seven year old Nicole insists that she can pack herself (five stuffed animals, her blanket and swim suit should just about do it!). Then of course there is Zachary (6 months) who needs everything under the sun for a short trip. Cindy and Mike are up until 1:00am packing.

After an hour on the road the kids start asking, "How much longer til we get there?" Mike decides to look at the map and realizes it's still at home. A quick stop for a map turns into a major episode when Cindy goes to change Zachary's diaper and realizes the diaper bag was buried underneath the luggage! Five stops, 2 changes of clothing and 3 bribes later, the Fry's arrive at their hotel exhausted.

The next morning everyone is excited to finally get to Disneyland. Cindy begins searching for the Buy One Get One Free coupon she is sure she packed,.... somewhere. Meanwhile, Mike gathers the camera and video camera and notices the video camera never got charged. After a long search for the coupon and waiting for the video camera to charge, they are on their way. The first character the kids run into is Cinderella. Mike gets out the camera to capture the moment only to find out he is out of film. The rest of their vacation continues in much the same fashion and by the time they arrive home Mike and Cindy are ready for a vacation from their vacation.



Planning ahead, rather than packing the night before you leave for a trip, will help your vacation get started on the right foot.

Tracy looks at her calendar and begins to plan. May is a busy month and they will be going on vacation over Memorial Day weekend. She counts up the graduation parties and makes a note on her "to do" list to buy graduation cards for the upcoming month. Next she begins going over their upcoming vacation plans. Pulling up her list of things to do before she leaves and revising her packing list makes packing a breeze. Next week Tracy will have the car serviced, find a neighbor who can feed the pets, buy film, charge the video camera, print out maps and stop at the post office to have their mail put on hold.

Several days before their trip Tracy checks the weather at their destination and prints out the packing lists. Brook, who is 7, is old enough to pack herself with a list in hand. Tracy allows Brandon to pick things out and help cross things off the list as they pack his bag together. Feeling so good about the work he's done, Brandon beams with pride. Later that night Tracy will pack for herself and baby Alex. The day before the trip, Tracy fills the car up with gas and takes the kids to the grocery store to buy snacks for the trip. They separate things in baggies and include wet wipes and napkins for spills and put it all in the van.

The drive to California is long but do-able with goodie bags and snacks packed for the kids and frequent stops made. Of course, the built-in DVD player in the van is a life saver! When the kids ask how much further, Kevin points to the rear view mirror to show how far they've gone and how much farther they need to go (see tips on page 2).

Disneyland turns out to be everything they hoped for and the Tell's have pictures and video to record their memories. It was great to get time away from home and to have time together as a family just having fun.

For great organization tips for traveling, turn to page 2!

real solutions for real life • Tips for Travel

Travel tips

- Keep a toiletry bag packed all year round. Do the same for a make up bag and a medicine bag. When it is time to leave for a trip, you will save time by not having to pack these things. Just throw the bag in the suitcase.
- If traveling by plane and checking luggage, tie each piece with a bright colored strip of cloth or ribbon. This will make finding it easier from the carousel.
- Choose thin, wrinkle resistant clothing for lower maintenance.
- Limit the amount of shoes you take. Choose clothing that works with 2-3 pairs of shoes. Wear the bulkiest ones on travel day.
- Pack more tops than bottoms. Bottoms (pants, skirts or shorts) take up more room and can be worn more than once.
- Leave the house in good order so you don't have to return to a messy home.
- Create a list on the computer for things that need to be done before you leave on a trip.
- Create a packing list on the computer which can be revised for each trip.

Travel tips for families with children

- When the kids ask how much farther, use the rearview mirror to give them an idea. If the left side of the mirror represents where home is, and the right side is your destination, point somewhere in the middle to indicate how far you have traveled.
- If you are traveling with infants or small children, consider traveling at night.
- Switching seats can add variety.
- Invest in a portable or built in TV/DVD player (be sure to limit the time they watch it, but it is a great way to help pass them time).
- Fill a ziploc bag with plastic silverware, napkins, straws and wet wipes. Also bring along a towel or two, some trash bags and paper towels for just about any type of mishap.
- If you are making a long car trip, consider packing a small bag of goodies for each state you pass through. You can fill them with treats and small toys.
- Pack books on tape, narrated stories on tape (such as *Adventures in Odyssey* or *The Chronicles of Narnia*) or bring books you can read to them.

If you have any other great travel tips email them to me so I can share them with my other readers! Send tips to perfectlyplaced@earthlink.net.

If you would like more help getting organized, call me at 623-933-1945 to set up an appointment.



14014 N. 130th Dr., El Mirage, AZ 85335