Times Tables at Home: Hints & Tips for Parents

Learning times tables doesn't have to mean sitting at a table memorising endless facts! Short, regular and enjoyable practice is often much more effective.

1. Keep practice short and regular

- Aim for 5–10 minutes a day rather than one long session each week.
- Stop while your child is still enjoying it.
- Celebrate improvement, not just correct answers.

2. Start with the tables they already know

Build confidence by beginning with familiar facts.

For example:

- If your child knows 5 × 4 = 20, use this to work out 6 × 4 = 24.
- If they know 2 × 7 = 14, they can double it to find 4 × 7 = 28.

Encourage them to explain how they worked it out, rather than simply giving the answer.

3. Look for patterns

Times tables contain lots of useful patterns.

For example:

- The 2 times table is double the number.
- The 5 times table ends in 0 or 5.
- The 10 times table involves adding a zero.
- The 4 times table is double, then double again.
- The 8 times table can be found by doubling three times.

Ask: *"What do you notice?"* Patterns help children understand rather than simply memorise.

4. Use everyday opportunities

Times tables can be practised almost anywhere.

Try questions such as:

- “There are 4 apples in each bag. How many are in 3 bags?”
- “We need 6 plates for each table. How many plates for 4 tables?”
- “A packet has 8 stickers. How many stickers are in 5 packets?”
- “If one toy costs £7, how much would 3 cost?”

Real-life examples help children see why multiplication is useful.

5. Make it a game

Turn practice into something playful:

- Roll two dice and multiply the numbers.
- Play times-table bingo.
- Challenge each other to quick-fire questions.
- Write multiplication facts on cards and match them to answers.
- Use playing cards: turn over two cards and multiply them.
- Look for multiplication opportunities when out shopping or travelling.

Tip: Games don't always need to involve winning. Cooperative challenges can be just as motivating.

6. Use skip counting

Before expecting children to recall a table instantly, practise counting in steps.

For the 4 times table:

4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28…

Try clapping, marching or bouncing a ball as you count. Adding movement can make the sequence easier to remember.

7. Teach the related facts

Help your child see that multiplication facts are connected.

If they know:

$3 \times 7 = 21$

they also know:

$7 \times 3 = 21$

This is called the commutative property. It means they don't need to learn both facts as completely separate pieces of information.

8. Use division to reinforce multiplication

Multiplication and division are closely connected.

For example:

$6 \times 4 = 24$

also tells us:

$24 \div 6 = 4$
$24 \div 4 = 6$

Ask your child to create the whole “fact family” from one multiplication fact.

9. Don't always go in order

If children only practise:

6 × 1, 6 × 2, 6 × 3, 6 × 4…

they may simply rely on counting up.

Mix the questions:

6 × 7 = ?
6 × 3 = ?
6 × 9 = ?
6 × 4 = ?

This encourages genuine recall.

10. Help them develop strategies for tricky facts

Some facts can be worked out from facts they already know.

For example, to solve 6 × 7, a child could think:

5 × 7 = 35
+ 1 × 7 = 7
35 + 7 = 42

The aim isn't always to memorise every answer immediately. Developing efficient strategies is an important part of learning.

11. Don't put pressure on speed

Being able to answer quickly is useful, but accuracy and understanding come first.

If your child needs time to think, give them time. Saying *"Take your time — how could you work it out?"* is often more helpful than *"Quick! What's 7 × 8?"*

12. Celebrate the small wins

Learning times tables takes time.

Praise things such as:

- “You remembered that one without counting!”
- “I like the strategy you used.”
- “You got three more correct than yesterday.”
- “You spotted that pattern yourself!”

Confidence can make a huge difference to children's willingness to keep practising.

A simple 10-minute routine

2 minutes: Count forwards and backwards in the target table.

3 minutes: Play a quick game or use flashcards.

3 minutes: Try mixed multiplication and division questions.

2 minutes: Finish with a few facts your child knows well and celebrate their success.

Most importantly: keep it positive. A few minutes of enjoyable practice every day is far more valuable than making times tables feel like a chore.

Helpful sites for maths-

https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z97rdnb#z3r3xg8

https://whizz.com/blog/fun-ways-to-teach-times-tables/