

## Multiplication Tables in 21 days!

Let's face it, when you don't know your times tables, it slows down your progress in math. Some things you just have to know and committing the times tables to memory is one of them. Today, we're in an information age, information is doubling faster than it ever used to and our math teachers no longer have the luxury of assisting us to learn the times tables. In case you haven't noticed, the math curriculum is much larger than it ever was. Students and parents are now left with the task of helping to commit the times tables to memory. So let's get started:

### Step 1

First of all, you will need to be able to skip count or count by a certain number. For instance 2,4,6,8,10 or 5, 10, 15, 20, 25. Now you will need to use your fingers when skip counting. Remember back in grade 1 when you used to use your fingers to count to 10? Now you'll need them to skip-count. For example, use your fingers to count by 10. First finger or thumb is 10, second is 20, third is 30. Therefore  $1 \times 10 = 10$ ,  $2 \times 10 = 20$  and so on and so forth. Why use your fingers? Because it's an effective strategy. Any strategy that improves speed with your tables is worth using!

### Step 2

How many skip counting patterns do you know? Probably the 2's, 5's and 10's. Practice tapping these out on your fingers.

### Step 3

Now you're ready for the 'doubles'. Once you learn the doubles, you have the 'counting up' strategy. For instance, if you know that  $7 \times 7 = 49$ , then you'll count up 7 more to quickly determine that  $7 \times 8 = 56$ . Once again, effective strategies are almost as good as memorizing your facts. Remember, you already know the 2's, 5's and 10's. Now you need to concentrate on 3x3, 4x4, 6x6, 7x7, 8x8 and 9x9. That's only committing 6 facts to memory! You're three-quarters of the way there. If you memorize those doubles, you'll have an effective strategy to quickly obtain most of the remaining facts!

### Step 4

Not counting the doubles, you have the 3's, 4's, 6's, 7's and 8's. Once you know what 6x7 is, you'll also know what 7x6 is. For the remaining facts (and there aren't many) you will want to learn by skip-counting, in fact use a familiar tune while skip counting! Remember to tap your fingers (just as you did when counting) each time you skip count, this enables you to know which fact you're on. When skip counting by 4's and when you've tapped on the fourth finger, you'll know that it's the  $4 \times 4 = 16$  fact. Think of Mary Had A Little Lamb in your mind. Now apply 4,8, 12, 16, (Mary had a....)and continue on! Once you've learned to skip-count by 4's as easily as you can by 2's, you're ready for the next fact family. Don't worry if you forget the odd one, you will be able to fall back on your doubling strategy and counting up.

Remember, being able to do math well means having great strategies. The above strategies will help you learn the times tables. However, you will need to commit daily time to these strategies to learn your tables in 21 days.