

Emergency Tool Kit for Happiness

(From Real Simple magazine – Gretchen Rubin, author)

Preventative measures to save yourself stress later: Putting gas in the car, keeping cash in the house, buying a book of stamps, and more

When we're stressed out, we tend to become even more stressed out. Why? Because when we're rushing around putting out fires, we don't take the time to do the little things that can end up saving enormous amounts of time and trouble.

Here's a list of preventive measures to save yourself stress later. These tasks don't seem particularly important, and they're easy to skip when you're rushed, but if neglected, they can snowball into major stress. Remember: A little effort now means a lot less stress later.

- Keep stamps in the house.
- Keep extra cash in the house.
- Have a good book to read.
- Bring a hat and an umbrella.
- Don't wear uncomfortable shoes.
- Don't let yourself get too hungry.
- Make a list.
- Always put your keys away in the same place - and keep an extra set of keys.
- Keep a Band-Aid and a small bottle of pain reliever in your car or your purse.
- Make your bed.
- Never let your car's gas level fall into the "empty" zone.
- Have at least one friend who lives in your neighborhood.
- Go to bed 30 minutes earlier than usual.
- Get up 20 minutes earlier than usual.
- Laugh at yourself.

Gretchen Rubin blogs about happiness, among other topics, for Real Simple's Simply Stated. Her book *The Happiness Project* (Harper Collins) is due out in 2009.