

THE BIG BOOK OF
**MAJOR
MUM
HACKS**

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SPHERE

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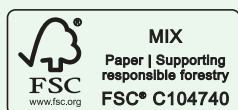
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Introduction

Hello my lovelies and welcome to my very first book of Major Mum Hacks that is accessible to everyone – and I mean the whole family, because no matter who you are, where you come from, how you learn, this book is for you.

I want anyone who picks up this book to feel empowered, because ultimately what I'm sharing here are ways that I know have helped me, personally, to navigate motherhood; hacks that have saved me effort and money, saved my sanity and, most importantly, my time.

Time is so special when you are a mum. It's something you can't buy and it's something there never seems to be enough of. But I am hoping that, with this book, I can help you use your time wisely and therefore enjoy the important things in life more regularly. Making memories with your children is so important, and we put such an emphasis on being the perfect mum or feeling like we are failing if we can't do it all.

“Ways to enjoy more time with our children. Ways to navigate the stresses and pressure that we unnecessarily put on ourselves to be perfect.”

The most beautiful people I know are those who have known suffering, known frustrations and found themselves struggling to find a way to cope with all that life demands of them. These people have an appreciation, a sensitivity and an understanding that fills them with compassion. People just like my own mum, Becky.

Mum taught me a lesson when I was very young, about creating a magical childhood, even if the odds are against you. When I was six years old, she gave birth to my younger brother. But then she became very ill. She became disabled through her illness, and the trouble was her illness was so unique the doctors didn't know what was causing it and whether it might be contagious, so they kept her away from us.

For around nine months we weren't allowed to see our mum, and our family dynamic changed very quickly. Dad was left to care for three children: me, my elder brother, who was twelve, and my younger brother, who was just a few months old.

When Mum finally came home, she was different. She had gone from being an active woman who took us swimming and went on family walks in the countryside, to a mum who would feel tired after half an hour and would spend her days in a wheelchair. And that meant we spent most of our days at home because my dad couldn't push my mum around in a wheelchair and push a baby at the same time – not to mention having to control two other children. But Mum never gave up on being a mum. She couldn't take us for long walks any more but she could still create memories for us, be the best she could be, but in ways that she adapted and made work for us and for her.

“I see the world a little bit differently and I love being able to help others when they come to me with, ‘Case, I need your help! How can I make this?’”

So instead of making cupcakes with us, which would involve lots of equipment and ingredients and tidying up afterwards, she would buy fairy cakes from the shop, remove the cheap icing and then we'd spend time having fun with her decorating the cakes with our own toppings.

She knew she had to manage her time more efficiently because of how tired she would get, and we enjoyed doing fun things with her – because who doesn't like spending time with their mum as a kid? My mum knew that, and she adjusted to her life being different – she had to find 'cheat' ways to help create those memories.

Some of the best days I ever had were the simplest, least fancy and least expensive. Like having sleepovers with my brothers and my cousins, Liz and Kyle, looking up at the stars, toasting marshmallows, thinking it was so exciting to be awake at 9 pm! Or going to the park with them, making dens in our house, or being with family for dinner – being surrounded by love was just everything.



(L-R) My brother Jamie, cousin Liz, me, my cousin Kyle and brother Clancy. Some of the best times of my childhood were the simplest, least fancy and least expensive.

So, this is really where my hacks probably began – in the midst of my own childhood. And I love bringing that idea back, like recipes passing on to the next generation, ways to make our lives easier. Ways to enjoy more time with our children. Ways to navigate the stresses and pressure that we unnecessarily put on ourselves to be perfect. Why do we do that? Honestly, why? And then if we have a 'bad' day, we think we are failures. What's that all about? Who dictates what makes us a failure?

I will say this until I'm blue in the face, but here it is: one bad day does not make you a bad mum. Ditto for one bad week or one bad month. It does not make you A. Bad. Mum. Stop beating yourself up. And – *spoiler alert* – nobody who ever thought they were a bad mum actually is.

We feel like we are failing if we can't do it all, and we feel like we are cheating

“If anyone thinks I am some super-sussed, ducks-in-a-row mum, please know that I am the biggest worrier ... I have pigeons all over the place.”

if we cut corners – but cutting corners or using hacks or being clever with our time simply means we don't lose out on any of the joy. And life is too short to miss out on any of that joy.

There are moments in our lives that shape us for ever. Sometimes we can't let go of certain memories because they are constant reminders of a great story that we never expected to end. Watching my twins play and grow up together reminds me of my cousin and me – we were so close and we did everything together growing up.

When she died of meningitis, my world ended. We had just started the second year of secondary school and from that point on, everything changed.

So believe me when I say I know about time, I know that you have to appreciate what you have at the time and in some ways, giving my children the best memories is everything to me. It's a way of healing what I lost and I think we can all relate to loss and healing ourselves through our children because every moment is a gift.

Which is why I am so proud to bring you this book which celebrates making the most of everything, no matter your situation.

I have always been that sort of mum that's been asked by other mums about fixing this or making that because I am a problem solver. I am autistic and dyslexic, and I have always had to find ways of being able to adapt to situations, to find my own way because conventional ways were tricky and tiring and over-stimulating.

I see the world a little bit differently and I love being able to help others when they come to me with, 'Case, I need your help! How can I make this?'

My hacks spiralled from there. One of my friends said I should put some of them on Instagram and my first thought was, 'Don't be daft, who's going to want to see that!'

If anyone thinks I am some super-sussed, ducks-in-a-row mum, please know that I am the biggest worrier, I have no confidence in myself and I have pigeons all over the place. I am confident that everyone else knows what they are doing, but I will criticise and question and judge myself until the cows come home. I am without a doubt my own worst critic, so my wonderful husband, Zues (spelled like that because I am dyslexic, remember, although that's not his real name, just

a pet name I gave him that's stuck!), and my family know they never need to say anything – I'll be beating myself up already.

But I am also the biggest believer that things are meant to be. When I posted my first hack – one about Halloween – in October 2022, I was nervous but at the same time thought I had nothing to lose. Because things do work out in the end, whatever life throws at you. And there is no such thing as having your life sorted or being perfect.

Growing up, I think I realised that sooner than most people. I went to an all-girls school – I had to get the bus and I would always lose my bus ticket. Always. My parents had to give me extra bus money each day because they knew I'd lose it. Then, one day, I came home and I had lost a shoe! My mum was like, 'How?!' And I didn't know the answer. I think then I was showing some of the early signs of autism and I remember I did find the transition to secondary school really hard, so much so that I had counselling. But back then no one really understood why I was struggling and what was going on.

So believe me (again!) when I say I get the idea that people find things tricky, that we are all trying our best and that we all want ways to make our lives easier.

And I hope you find some of my hacks useful. They are problem-solvers. They are things you didn't know you needed but that might well have a big impact.

I know full well that if my cousin were here with me right now she would be my biggest cheerleader. Which is why it's important for us to stick together, right? To help each other, and to share the ideas and the tricks and the tools that have shaped us, to help us navigate this thing called Motherhood in the best way possible.

Some memories never leave you, they're in your bones, and wouldn't it be wonderful if we could create such magical times for our children without feeling like we are failing if we don't get everything right?

I'm Major Mum Hacks and I'm so pleased you're here.

Much love,

Casey x
aka Major Mum Hacks



Essentials list

There are lots of items I would call 'essentials' that I use for many of my hacks in this book, so if you like to be prepared (and who doesn't?) here's a list of the basics that feature most often. Think of it as creating your very own store cupboard of hack ingredients.

- ★ Effervescent tablets
- ★ Art caddy
- ★ Balloons
- ★ Cable ties
- ★ Disposable gloves
- ★ Double-sided tape
- ★ Edible eyes
- ★ Edible glue
- ★ Empty plastic bottles (it's great to keep a supply of these)
- ★ Glow sticks
- ★ Glue gun
- ★ Kids' stickers (although you probably have a million of these around the house)
- ★ Masking tape
- ★ Muffin tin
- ★ PVA glue
- ★ Shoe organiser
- ★ Silicone cupcake holders
- ★ Velcro dots
- ★ Zipped sandwich bags



Mums are everything, all at once: chefs, personal assistants, teachers, chauffeurs, event planners, birthday party organisers, nurses, dentists, and defenders against bad dreams.

Which is why our homes are the place we need to be the most efficient so we can spend more time making memories with the people that mean the most to us.

These are some of my favourite hacks for making everyday home life both simple and satisfying. I've broken them up into sections so you can navigate easily to hacks that will help you in any given situation.



15. Filled croissants hack

Be a little experimental with your plain croissants and save yourself money on the more expensive filled bakery treats by creating your own versions.

Your kids will love to help with this too, which is why we like to do this at weekends when there is a bit more time in the mornings to make breakfast together.

And you can vary your fillings depending on what you or the children fancy that morning: strawberry jam, marmalade, chocolate spread, peanut butter – or a combination of any of the above!

- ★ Take a packet of plain croissants and decide what fillings you are going to use to fill them first
- ★ Using a medical syringe (I keep syringes from kids' used medicine bottles for this purpose) fill it with your chosen filling
- ★ Tear a small opening in the croissant with your fingers, or push the syringe through to make a gap in the pastry
- ★ Then empty the yummy filling from your syringe into your croissant
- ★ If you are using chocolate spread and want it a little runny, simply warm the croissant for 30–40 seconds in the microwave after filling

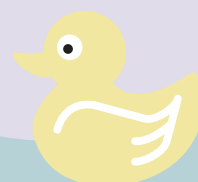
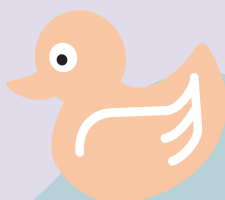
25. Squirty bath toys hack

Bath time wouldn't be bath time without a rubber duckie or squirty toy added to the mix, but they can hold all sorts of yucky black mould inside them when water gets inside the hole.

What's even worse is that the black mould then gets emptied out into the lovely clean water every time your child wants to play with them in the bath. Well, no more, duckie, no more!

- ★ Heat up a glue gun and dry off the bath toys you want to seal – if they haven't already been contaminated with mould then they are fine to use, otherwise you might like to give them a quick clean first
- ★ Or buy a new set of toys and line them up
- ★ When the glue gun is hot, fill up the holes and leave to set
- ★ If you don't have a glue gun you could also use a waterproof patch or seal adhesive
- ★ Test out each toy to see that no water is able to enter and then you are good to go – get the bath running!

Rubber ducks come in all shapes and sizes, but their holes are usually underneath and not too big to seal. Squirty toys are obviously no longer squirty after this hack, but you also won't be contaminating your bathwater!



26. Disco bath hack



HACK THE HACK:

If your child isn't keen on having a bath, or washing hair is sometimes a battle, having a disco bath will most probably become your new bedtime routine staple – it will be getting them out of the bath that might be the problem!

Discos aren't just for an evening's entertainment and party frocks. Why not have your very own disco in the bath – no clothes required!

My children love having an impromptu disco bath and the best part of doing this watery sensory activity is that you don't need anything expensive to create it, just a pack of disposable glow sticks!

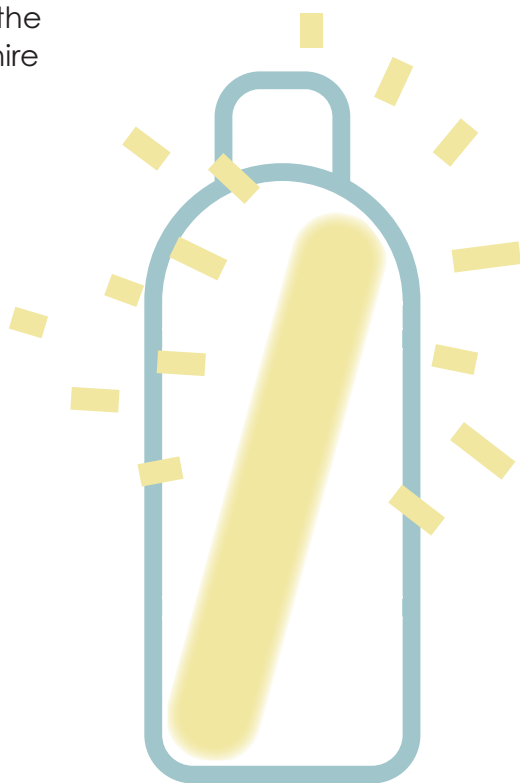
- ★ Fill a bath as you normally would and then take out the glow sticks – they are non-toxic and leak free, which means they are safe to use in the water
- ★ Break the sticks so they start to glow and then pop them in the bath
- ★ Turn off the bathroom lights and invite your children to step inside the disco room – formerly known as the bathroom
- ★ Play some music through a speaker if you want to create a real disco atmosphere, or choose some relaxation music for a more chilled vibe
- ★ The colours glow brighter in warm water as they react to heat, so they will make the water appear really magical

101. Glow-in-the-dark bowling hack

Bowling is a lot of fun but it can be super expensive to go to the lanes as a family once you factor in a couple of games, drinks, etc.

So bowling at home – in the dark – is likely to make you the top scorer in the family as you challenge everyone to get strikes with the lights off!

- ★ Take as many empty plastic bottles as you can – I find small water bottles are best for this – and place an activated glow stick into each bottle
- ★ At one end of the room, place the bottles in a triangle shape so that you have one bottle at the front and then the others coming out behind at the sides. Then put all the soft balls you want to roll at the other end of the room ready for the bowlers.
- ★ Now turn off the lights and invite your family into the room for a bowling-in-the-dark experience – no hire shoes required!



102. Icing hack for biscuit decorating



Biscuit decorating is one of my all-time favourite activities that involves little cost, lots of enjoyment and plenty of creative imagination – the possibilities and themes are endless.

This is a basic hack for biscuit decorating that can be built upon for different occasions, and gives you a starting point for some more fancy ideas.

- ★ Take a packet of your favourite plain biscuits (we love plain digestives) and set them out on little plates for each child
- ★ Using a plastic make-up organiser, put different coloured icing tubes in each compartment so the children can easily help themselves to their favourite colours
- ★ If smaller children find it tricky to squeeze out the icing, put the tubes in a cup of boiling water for a minute or two and then back into the organiser. The water will soften the icing and make it easier to pipe out



MAJOR MUM
HACKS VIDEO

