

Times Tables Tricks: one trick per table, and the 21 facts that are all that is really left

First, the rule that halves the job: $6 \times 8 = 8 \times 6$ (the turn-around rule). Then the 1s, 2s, 5s and 10s are patterns, and the 11s and 12s are short rules. What is left is 21 facts.

One trick per table

- 2s** double the number.
- 3s** double, then add the number once more (3×7 : $14 + 7 = 21$). Check: the digits of the answer add to 3, 6 or 9.
- 4s** double, then double again (4×7 : 14, 28).
- 5s** half of the 10s ($5 \times 8 = 40$, half of 80). Odd number: ends in 5; even: ends in 0.
- 6s** even numbers: the answer ends in the number, tens = half of it ($6 \times 4 = 24$, $6 \times 8 = 48$). Odd: 5 times plus one more ($6 \times 7 = 35 + 7$).
- 7s** no pattern: the turn-around rule covers all but $7 \times 7 = 49$ and $7 \times 8 = 56$ ('5, 6, 7, 8').
- 8s** double three times (8×6 : 12, 24, 48). Units go 8, 6, 4, 2, 0 and repeat.
- 9s** fingers: fold down the finger for the number; tens on the left, units on the right ($9 \times 4 = 36$). Check: digits add to 9; tens digit is one less than the number. Or $10 \times n$ minus n .
- 10s** add a zero.
- 11s** write the digit twice ($11 \times 6 = 66$); $11 \times 12 = 120 + 12 = 132$.
- 12s** the 10s plus the 2s ($12 \times 7 = 70 + 14 = 84$).

The 21 facts left to memorise

Squares	Cross-facts
$3 \times 3 = 9$	$3 \times 4 = 12$, $3 \times 6 = 18$, $3 \times 7 = 21$, $3 \times 8 = 24$, $3 \times 9 = 27$
$4 \times 4 = 16$	$4 \times 6 = 24$, $4 \times 7 = 28$, $4 \times 8 = 32$, $4 \times 9 = 36$
$6 \times 6 = 36$	$6 \times 7 = 42$, $6 \times 8 = 48$, $6 \times 9 = 54$
$7 \times 7 = 49$	$7 \times 8 = 56$, $7 \times 9 = 63$
$8 \times 8 = 64$	$8 \times 9 = 72$
$9 \times 9 = 81$	

Two-week plan, ten minutes a day

Days 1-2: turn-around rule with counters; 2s, 5s, 10s. Days 3-4: 4s and 8s by doubling. Days 5-6: 9s finger trick. Days 7-8: 3s and 6s; say 3×7 , 3×8 , 6×7 , 6×8 twice a day. Days 9-10: 7×7 and 7×8 ; the 11s and 12s rules. Days 11-14: 25 mixed questions, six seconds each (the Year 4 check format); wrong ones on a card for tomorrow.

Order to learn the tables: 2, 10, 5, 4, 8, 9, 3, 6, 7, 11, 12. Ask backwards too ('what times 7 is 56?'). Right once is learnt; right on three different days is remembered. 1-on-1 online maths from Year 2: sciencewithshobha.com/subjects/ks2-sats/