

RESOURCE GUIDE: My Top 12 Ninja Necessities for Making it Cheaper, Easier and MORE FUN to Be a Stay-at-Home/Work-at-Home Mom!

1-Crock Pot/Slow Cooker

This is my secret weapon, and if you've read anything I've written before, you'll know why! I LOVE being able to toss in a few simple ingredients in the morning (when I typically have more time), and then have dinner ready to eat at 6:00. In my opinion, every mom's kitchen needs at least one (or 2) of these! I like that this one has a removable stone insert, as this makes it MUCH easier to wash. Handles, and tabs that lock the lid closed are also super-important features. With the locking lid, the food cooks faster (and more evenly) and it makes the contents of the crock pot much easier and safer to transport. The last thing you want is soup all over your car floor. (*Don't ask me how I know this!*) This one has a 6-quart capacity.

2-Rice Cooker

Again, this small appliance will save you SO MUCH time. Let's say you have some chicken with Asian sauce in your crock pot (*above*). If you also start some rice in your rice cooker, then you've got a complete meal on the way. The rice cooker will turn to "warm" once it's done cooking, and will keep your rice warm for up to 5 hours. My rice cooker also has a vegetable steamer, so I can add fresh or frozen veggies and add one more healthy side dish to my family's meal – all ready-to-eat at the end of the day when I'm the most stressed and tired.

3-Instant Pot

This is a newer addition to my line-up, but I love it! You may argue that you don't need one of these, if you already have the crock pot and the rice cooker (*above*). I agree with you in theory, but not in practicality. Whereas it's true that the Instant Pot can serve as a slow cooker, as well as a rice cooker, but it fills many other roles. For one thing, if you happen to FORGET to put your ingredients in the crock pot in the morning, then the Instant Pot will *save your bacon* at 4:00 PM when you suddenly remember! Just pop the ingredients in, set the correct settings, and your dinner will be ready in about an hour. This one can also sauté ingredients, in addition to making yogurt (kind of fun to try!)

4-Essential Oils

I love this basic kit of oils to get you started! Essential oils are great for the whole family, and they allow you to approach your family's daily health in a very natural way. The oils are used

primarily for prevention, by boosting your immune system (which is the same service they provide to the plant they came from). I have lots of “recipes” for natural, safe and effective cleaners you can make – using essential oils – that will then help you be rid of a lot of toxins in your household.

5-Laptop Computer

This is a Dell laptop with an SSD hard drive. Any person running a household really needs a laptop! It’s handy for letter writing, recipes, emails, etc. Plus, if you’re considering starting a home business at all, it’s even more essential. As your children grow, they’ll need access to a computer, as well.

I chose one with an SSD hard drive, as they are more reliable than other types of computers. You’ll want to look for one with 8 - 16 GB of Ram. (Sixteen if you’re going to be using your computer a lot!)

6-Lamp Timer

This may sound funny, but this simple lamp timer can do so much more than turn on and off your lamps when you’re out of town! I like lamp timers because they can essentially turn on and off ANY appliance that has a plug. For example, if my crock pot and rice cooker don’t have timers (which mine don’t) I can use this lamp timer to turn them on and off for me. They’re also great for Christmas tree lights, and you could even use it on the TV set. (*“Sorry, kids. Our TV only works from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM.”*) They don’t have to know your secret!

7-Digital Kitchen Timer

Digital timers are so helpful, and I highly recommend them. You can use them for so many things! Not only can you time your cookies while they’re in the oven, but these timers can prevent you from losing track of time in every area of your life. For example, you can give yourself 15 minutes to declutter in your kitchen; the 20 minutes to work on laundry; then 10 minutes to catch up on our email. I like this one because it has number buttons to punch in the exact time you need. (With other timers, you have to punch the “+” button 60 times in order to get to 1 hour. Kind of a pain!)

8-Filing Crate/ Hanging Files/ File Folders

I chose these options because they are colorful. In addition to being more fun, colors are helpful because you can color code by topic or category. I’m setting you up with a 3-pack of crates, because you’ll need AT LEAST that many to get started. You’ll find that crates have a lot more uses than just using them for your files. They are fantastic for corralling toys and for sorting laundry!

9-Exercise Ball

Moms need a chance to exercise, yet it is not always easy to make it out of the house and to the gym. An exercise ball is a great piece of exercise equipment that is NOT dangerous for the kids to be

around. Even better, you can use the ball to have FUN with the kids, and you can teach them how awesome it is to exercise. Plus, this ball is a great price and (*wait for it ...*) it comes in colors!

10-Tried and True Recipe Book – This is one is mine, *haha!* ☺ Just as the name implies, I put together some “tried-and-true” recipes that are simple to make, relatively healthy, and loved by my whole family. There are 9 different categories, from breakfasts to main courses to desserts, with 5 cherished recipes in each category. *You’ve gotta have these recipes in your repertoire!*

11-Family Games & Fun Books: Every household needs its library of must-have games and books. These are some favorites that you and your family will love:

- **Telestrations** – This is a cross between the old-fashioned game of “telephone,” when you sit in a circle and whisper a phrase into your neighbor’s ear, and “Pictionary,” when you have to draw a picture. The recommended age is 12 and up, but I think kids a little younger than that could handle it. My family absolutely loves it. We often end up in gales of laughter as a result of this fun game!
- **Junior Monopoly – Dora Version** OR **Electronic Banking Version** – Monopoly is a great game for teaching children the power and value of money. The “Junior” versions are nice because they take much less time to play, and are scaled down to concepts that kids can understand. The Dora version is a board game, whereas the Electronic Banking version is one that kids can play on a computer. Choose the one that would work best with your children and their circumstances.
- **Goodnight Moon** (board book) – I can still hear my mother’s voice reading this book out loud to me. There’s just something so soothing about this book. It is a definite bedtime classic. (I like the board book version here, because it is sturdier for little hands to grasp and play with.)
- **Wonky Donkey** - This is a newer book, but so fun to read out loud! I dare you to try reading it without giggling!
- **Sissie the Truck-driving Dog (coming soon!)** – This is a series of books that I am in the process of writing. It’s about a dog who sleeps all day (like most dogs do) and yet secretly wakes up and drives trucks at night. She is named after our actual dog, and my youngest son helped me come up with the idea. They will start out as e-books, and may “graduate” to physical books after that. I will let you know as soon as they’re available on Amazon!

12-Water Filter

Some areas of the country are worse than others, but I still believe that everyone needs a good water filter. You want to filter out the particulates that are often found in tap water, in addition to the pesticides and other chemicals that frequently find their way in. This water filter is my favorite, because it does not require electricity. It also incorporates several types of water filtration, not counting the typical carbon filter (which it also has). The other thing I love about it is the natural mineral stones that are placed on the bottom of the filter. They restore the trace minerals that are important to our health, but that are stripped out by the regular filtration process.

Great Extras:

As usual, I try to over deliver! Here are a few more resources that I really love, and which I believe you'll find helpful, as well.

Baby Monitor

I like this one because it's under \$30, reliable, and saves you time because you're not constantly running to check on your sleeping baby. It also gives you peace of mind. You'll know as soon as baby wakes up!

Water Bottle – This water bottle has no BPA plastics, plus it's stainless steel, not breakable, and has 2 lids included (a screw-on + a pop-top). I also love that it comes in a variety of different colors! Color is how we express our personality. ☺

Teaching Your Children Joy, by Linda and Richard Eyre – This is a *fantastic* parenting book. The Eyres have raised nine children, so I think you'll agree with me that they qualify as experts. They are very popular public speakers on the topic of parenthood. With this link, you can choose a paperback, an e-book, or other book form of your choice.

Dating Divas – This is a wonderful website full of resources for marriages and families. Their tagline is, "Strengthening Marriages, One Date at a Time." There are a lot of fun printables here, and many of them are free. There are ideas for dates, as well as for family activities, and for get-togethers with other couples. Be sure to check it out!