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# TWINS™

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May/June 2017

Summer  
safety  
tips

GET OUTDOORS  
TWINS travel  
special!

2017  
stroller  
guide

Twin-proofing  
your back yard



Take your  
toddler twins  
hiking

Disney:  
tackling the Magic  
Kingdom with twins





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## On the Cover



Hollyn and Allyn are fraternal twins who turned three in April. They are best friends, but they couldn't be more different.

Hollyn loves to play outside, swim, and go to music class. Allyn loves to be silly, tell jokes, and make up songs. Both girls love the beach but are scared of crabs after Hollyn was bitten by one last year.

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## ANOTEFROMTHEEDITOR

### Here comes the sun...

The sky is blue, the sun is shining and that can mean only one thing... Summer is here, and it's time to go and explore the great outdoors!

With the summer break just around the corner, we've dedicated this issue to travel and getting out and about with your twins. We've got tips for tackling Disney World (28) and road trips (18) with your twins. For those who are staying closer to home this summer, we have some great tips to make your backyard a safe haven for little ones (16), and even some ideas for exercises to do with your twins (26) — perfect for keeping the whole family active!

The summer months when the whole family can be together is such a precious time, so to make sure your memories are perfectly captured we've got some great tips from Heidi Green (33). Heidi is one of NYC's most in-demand photographers, known specifically for her work snapping pictures of children at parties and other special events.

Don't forget to send us your best pics — simply upload your photos through our new submissions form at:

[www.twinsmagazine.com/double-takes](http://www.twinsmagazine.com/double-takes)

for the chance to be featured in our next issue's Double Takes section.

I hope you enjoy this issue of TWINS™ Magazine, and you and your twins have a fantastic fun-filled summer! Stay safe!



Sincerely,

*Laura Cunningham*

Laura Cunningham,  
Editor-in-Chief



## TWINS IN THE NEWS



**S**cots twins Louisa and Christina Thompson are going head to head in the final of Miss Great Britain. The 27-year-olds are both nurses, and are the first siblings to ever reach the final.

However this competition isn't a show of sibling rivalry; the pair are really pleased they both made it this far. Christina said, "We both want to do as well as we possibly can but, if only one of us can win, then I hope Louisa is the winner — and Louisa hopes it is me."



**M**adonna shared this holiday snap of her recently adopted twins Esther and Stella (4) as they explored the Mosteiro dos Jerónimos in Lisbon, Portugal.

**B**lue Ivy is going to be helping out mom Beyoncé in the delivery room when it is time for the twins to be born. The decision to have a five-year-old present at the birth has been carefully planned, and the superstar hopes that this will help Blue Ivy bond with her siblings and avoid any jealous feelings.

Blue Ivy is set to be the first person to hold the babies after the doctor hands them to Jay Z. A source told Heat Magazine that Blue is excited about the birth, and has some big responsibilities on the day: she has a special notepad to write down the twins' weights, and she will be helping to tie the identification bracelets on their wrists.

Of course, the birth of a sibling is a very important day, so Beyoncé has made sure that the little fashionista will look the part. Blue reportedly has been kitted out with a \$1200 Givenchy nurse's outfit which she will be wearing on the big day.

It seems nobody is sure when the twins are due to arrive, but fans are speculating that we can expect the news any day now. This means that it's almost certain that her new arrivals will be Geminis. Although Gemini, symbolized by the twins Castor and Pollux would be fitting, some fans are freaking out — according to the internet this astrological sign is the worst. Only time will tell!







**B**razilian twin sisters Maria Pignaton Pontin and Paulina Pignaton Pandolfi have reached fame after photos from their birthday photo shoot went viral on social media.

The twins have recently turned 100 and they celebrated with a party surrounded by friends and family. The pair have 11 children between them, as well as a combined 54 grandchildren and great grandchildren! The images were captured by photographer Camila Lima as a birthday gift to them.



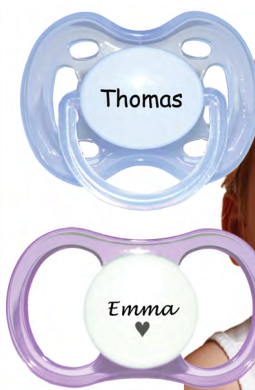
**S**un Yutong and Sun Yumeng, identical twins from Nanjing, have ticked Harvard off their bucket list. The twins graduated from Harvard Graduate School of Education with masters' degrees and live-streamed the experience to over 170,000 internet users worldwide. The twins first reached notoriety last May when they graduated from Shanghai's Fudan University.

**A** new study has found that identical twins have identical vision.

Researchers at Anglia Ruskin University discovered the results after examining the vision of 69 sets of twins, 36 of whom are identical twins. The results showed that identical twins shared identical defects, even in over-50s where environmental factors may have normally influenced these aberrations.



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# AIRPORTS & INFANT TWINS

## A PRIMER

by Kay Bailey

**M**y daughters were smaller and lighter than carry-ons when my husband and I took them through an airport for the first time. Despite their compact nature, they made the experience a real (ahem) adventure. Here are some things we learned about traveling through airports – and traveling through life – with twins.

Curbside check-in isn't as easy when you have twins among your baggage. Babies have a lot of stuff that they can't carry themselves. This starts to cause trouble the second you get to the airport. Take getting out of the car, for example. First, both parents get out, leaving the hazard lights on. Parent 1 sprints to the back, hoists out the double stroller, and shakes it around with jerky motions that are reminiscent of trying to start a lawnmower. With only mild injuries, Parent 1 gets the stroller to snap easily into place.

Meanwhile, Parent 2 is getting Baby A and Baby B ready to sit in the stroller. That means unbuckling the carseats, removing Baby A, buckling her into one stroller seat, running toward Baby B. Oh, noticing that Baby A has started to list toward the street. Running back toward Baby A to put the stroller brake on, and then returning for Baby B. Extracting Baby B from her carseat and running her over to the stroller to get buckled in beside her sister.

The babies must be dressed in a perfect yet unknowable number of layers. This is so they will

not get cold or hot. They will be snugly but not too bulky to fit in the stroller straps. If they spit up or wet themselves, you can remove and discard the top or bottom layers as needed. All clothes in an airport are disposable.

While Parent 2 unloads the car, Parent 1 uninstalls the carseats and bases and wrestles them into protective covers. Parent 1 then runs laps to leave the luggage in a clump near the check-in desk, but not in such a way as to make it look like unaccompanied baggage that the bomb squad would have to blow up.

Parent 2 checks in with one credit card and shows the agent both photo IDs, then runs back to the babies in the stroller just as Parent 1 is running toward the agent to say, "I'm the one on the other driver's license." Parent 1 will have three bags hanging from her and will no longer look like her license picture which was taken when she was Young six months ago.

Once the suitcases with the formula, diapers, wipes, bottles, bottle brush, microwave sterilization bags, onesies, PJs, diaper cream, baby wash, swaddling blankets, disassembled bouncy seats, and two adult toothbrushes have been checked, the next big challenge is security.

Homeland Security does a good job of guarding against strollers. If you are foolish enough to think that Parent 2 should be parking the car while Parent 1 gets the babies to the gate, you will be





sending Parent 1 through Security alone. If professional terrorists can't get through the metal detectors with disruptive items, you know it won't be easy for you. But it's possible.

Keep your ID and your boarding pass out and start removing your clothes. Take off your children's outerwear too. When I did this in 2009, TSA made us take off the babies' shoes. BA. BY. SHOES. When sleep-deprived parents ended up being scarier than any shoe bomber, however, TSA dropped this requirement.

Next, get your little bobble-heads out of the stroller so it can go through the X-ray machine. One easy way is to put the babies on the conveyor belt while you collapse the stroller, but this is really only advisable if the belt is going very, very slowly. It is safer and easier just to ask a couple different strangers to hold your babies. Choose nice ones so that if they end up kidnapping your children, at least your kids will be in good hands.

If that fails, you can dump your stuff onto the conveyor belt, scoop up your babies, and ask someone else to fold up the stroller for you. Practice your authoritative-yet-sympathetic voice and precise instructions beforehand. Make it immediately obvious which of the twelve levers the person must push inward while releasing Velcro Panel 8. Break the news gently that your industrial stroller will not go through the regular X-ray machine, so TSA personnel will either have to

take it to a larger machine or run a magic wand all around it and test it for gunpowder. Remember to be extremely careful with your gunpowder before the trip.

When you emerge from Security, you will be stripped and barefoot. Your luggage will be unpacked and your stroller will be jammed into an incorrect forced fold. Your two mostly naked charges will be laid tenuously on an aluminum bench and in a moment will surprise you by rolling over for the first time. When everything is back in order you will see Parent 2 coming round the bend.

By this time you will despair, thinking that your journey is just beginning. But what you don't yet know is that the trip from the car to the concourse is a rite of passage. Once you have hauled your family all the way to Gate 12 and lived to tell the tale, you'll find there is nothing you can't do. Sit on a plane with wiggly babies for three hours? No problem. Change two diapers in an airplane lavatory? Child's play. Juggle career and multiples as you achieve a satisfactory work-life balance? Well, why not?

While you were making it all happen, everybody around you was noticing what a force of nature you had become. They can see, and maybe you will start to as well, that what lies ahead of you now is yours to conquer. So get on that plane and go soaring. Because anyway, once you have cleared Security, there's no going back. ♡

# THE SPIDER-MAN SHOES

by Francesca Kelly

**W**hen I found out I was going to have twins, I thought I was prepared. After all, I already had two children close in age. And what I didn't know about twins, people were happy to tell me; for suddenly parents of twins were appearing out of nowhere with advice about diapers, endless night-time feedings and going crazy during the first few months. But no one ever told me about sibling rivalry.

Now you can't blame me for being proud of my high-minded philosophy for raising twins: Don't buy two of everything; let them learn to share. By the time they were three, I had actually done a pretty good job of sticking with it. When Max wanted a cheeseburger and Ned wanted chicken nuggets, I let them order what they wanted even though I knew they'd change their minds and want what the other had. When they fought over who got to turn the pages of 'The Cat in the Hat,' we patiently worked it out so they would alternate a page at a time. In the interest of keeping the peace, I did sometimes buy two of the same item. However, I still hold that the "you'll-share-andyou'll-keep-smiling" system actually worked much of the time. But finally, not long ago, the system completely broke down. Blame it on the Spider-Man shoes!

## The Spider-Man era

One day shortly after their third birthday, I took the twins to the discount shoe store. This is the kind of place where what you see is what is in stock. We

found the preschool sizes, looked up and down the rows of shoes, and there they were... the Spider-Man shoes---one pair. "Spider-Man... I want them! I want them!" screamed the two little boys in unison. I was doomed. "Hold on, guys. What about these Winnie-the-Pooh shoes here? Aren't they nice?" They didn't fall for it. In desperation, I asked the salesman to make sure there weren't any more. Of course there weren't. "We might get more in soon," he shrugged. So I bought one pair of Winnie-the-Pooh shoes and the coveted Spider-Man shoes. "You can take turns wearing them," I told the boys.

## Off on the wrong foot

The very first day, after flipping a coin, it took an hour to cajole Ned into wearing the Winnie-the-Pooh shoes. This involved making Pooh, Tigger and Piglet cry in little A.A. Milne voices because no one wanted to wear their shoes. That worked long enough to get the shoes onto Ned's feet. "I've got Spider-Man shoes!" Max crowed all day long to everyone he met. To this Ned quickly bleated, "And I have Winnie-the-Pooh."

Each day one boy skipped down the street with Spider-Man while the other dragged along glumly with Eeyore, only to switch roles the following day. Ned took it the hardest. He started getting up progressively earlier and coming into our room, cradling the precious shoes. Our wake-up call became a small anxious voice pleading, "My turn for the Spider-Man shoes?"



One desperate day, when both boys would not budge and I couldn't even remember who'd worn the Spider-Man shoes the day before, I put one of each shoe on the boys' feet. They both thought it was hysterically funny.

My heart grew light. Why hadn't I thought of this before? It lasted all of one sweet, peaceful week. How could this have happened? They had never even watched Spider-Man. They love their Winnie-the-Pooh DVDs.

## We got shoes!

Finally, one glorious day almost eight weeks later I called the clerk at the shoe store. "Yeah, we've got more Spider-Man shoes in," the salesperson said. "Boys! Boys!" I cried out excitedly. "Guess what? Now you can each have your own very special pair of Spider-Man shoes!"

Max's feet were always a little bigger than Ned's, and the Spider-Man shoes, now a bit scuffed and gray, were actually getting too small for Max. So I figured I'd get new ones in a bigger size for Max and let Ned keep the ones we already had. I explained this to Ned, who seemed to understand enough to know that the Spider-Man shoes in our house would at long last be his and his alone.

Off we went to the shoe store and, sure enough, there were now lots of Spiderman shoes. I picked up a pair in Max's size. "Well, here they are, Max," I said brightly. "Your own new Spider-Man shoes, finally!"

He took a long, hard look at them. "I don't want those," he said. I felt a twitch developing in my right eyelid. "Well, you're getting them anyway!" I said through the gritted teeth of a forced smile.

I bought them and brought them home. We put them by Max's bed and by bedtime he was excited again. The "old" Spider-Man shoes were put by Ned's bed. The next morning we were awakened by a small figure standing at the size of the bed. It was Ned, and he was holding something. "My turn for the new Spider-Man shoes?" ♡

Photos: Getty Images

# CELEBS YOU NEVER KNEW WERE TWINS

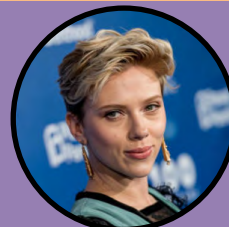


## Ashton Kutcher

Ashton has a twin brother called Michael, who was diagnosed with cerebral palsy and had a heart transplant at a young age. Michael now lives in Iowa and sells retirement plans.

## Scarlett Johansson

Scarlett's twin brother, Hunter, is often seen beside her at red carpet events. Hunter has been involved in numerous charity projects and even worked on Barack Obama's presidential campaign!

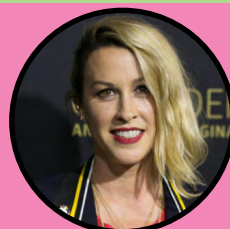


## Jim Broadbent

Jim Broadbent, famous for *Harry Potter*, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, *Moulin Rouge!* and many others had a twin sister who died at birth. He recently joined the cast of *Game of Thrones* and will be appearing in Season 7.

## Nicholas Brendon

Nicholas Brendon, best known for his role as Xander in hit series *Buffy*, has a twin brother called Kelly Donovan. The pair worked together on set — Donovan even played Xander's double!

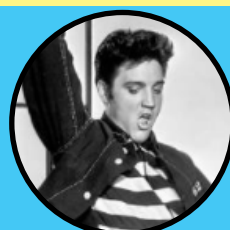


## Alanis Morissette

Alanis Morissette has a twin brother called Wade, who is a kirtan and indie-pop musician, yoga instructor, therapist and author. Alanis' son and Wade have the same middle name — Imre!

## Giovanni Ribisi

Another blast from the past, Giovanni Ribisi is probably best known as Frank Buffay in *Friends*. His twin sister, Marissa, also acts. She starred in *The Brady Bunch* movie and has her own fashion line.



## Elvis Presley

"The King" had an identical twin brother. Jesse Garon Presley was delivered stillborn 35 minutes before Elvis' own birth. Elvis was haunted by the loss of his twin for the rest of his life.

## How to Prevent

# STRETCH MARKS

by Laura Tarbell

**W**hen I came into the fifth month of my twin pregnancy and people started to comment on how much I was growing, there were a few things that started worrying me. The first... how in the world is this going to work!? They are coming soon! YIKES! The second... stretch marks. I talked to a lot of women who got stretch marks during their second pregnancy. I know it is much harder to eat healthy and find the time to exercise while caring for another child, or two! I wasn't really worried about losing the baby weight, but stretch marks don't go away, and that made me nervous.

I decided to research possible ways to prevent stretch marks and really focus on those during the last 3-4 months of pregnancy. Not all pregnant women get stretch marks, so there has to be something more to it than just being pregnant. First, here is some technical information to give you to have a better understanding of stretch marks related to pregnancy.

### WHAT ARE STRETCH MARKS?

Stretch marks, or striae, are a consequence of stretching skin, especially repeated stretching of the skin. Statistically, stretch marks affect between 70% and 90% of pregnant women. They are said to be the result of disrupted hormones and nutrient deficiencies. However, nature designed us well. So hopefully, as long as we follow nature's prescription, stretch marks won't leave their mark. Hopefully!

Stretch marks form on the dermis layer of the skin, located just underneath the outer layer called the epidermis. When the skin stretches, the connective tissues in the dermis layer can become compromised leading to blood vessel dilation (these are the early stage red or purplish lines). Later, as the body tries to heal itself from these breaks, cells begin to divide to fill in the gap. If the damage is deep enough, the cells produce a scar to heal the wound. In the case of stretch marks, melanin production ceases and the skin is left with white hypopigmented scars.

### CAUSES OF STRETCH MARKS

Stretch marks are caused by a degradation of the connective tissue of the dermal layer of the skin. Stretching, combined with other factors which weaken this layer, causes the scars we refer to as stretch marks.

Stretching alone, however, is not enough to cause stretch marks. The skin is designed to stretch. Men and women all over the world experience skin stretching but not all experience stretch marks. The current focus of prevention is on hormones and collagen.

### COLLAGEN

Collagen is the most extensive structural protein in the body. Collagen and elastin make up about 90% of the skin's thickness. These fibers form an elastic weave over our entire bodies allowing the skin to be stretched substantially without compromising its integrity.

Skin is like a rubber band. As long as the rubber is in good condition, the rubber band will not show any marks from stretching, even when stretched to its limit. However, when that rubber band gets old and/or its fibers become dry, even when you stretch it just a bit, it cracks and breaks appear. The same holds true for skin. When the skin is healthy, it will stretch with no signs of having been stretched. The skin is a little more sophisticated however than a rubber band in that a rubber band's elasticity has a limit. A rubber band will never be able to stretch further than it was designed to stretch. The skin on the other hand can make new collagen to strengthen its connective tissues, enabling it to stretch more and more over time. The skin can do this as long as it has the building blocks it needs to make new elastic fibers.

Under certain conditions such as a hormone imbalance from pregnancy and nutritional deficiencies, the body may not produce sufficient amounts of collagen and elastin. Like a rubber band, when these protein fibers are not reinforced to withstand the rapid and extensive stretching, the connective tissues break apart from the bottom up, tearing the skin and leaving a scar.

### PREVENTION OF STRETCH MARKS

Hydration from the inside and outside Everyone knows it is important to keep the skin moisturized. Topically, [www.Americanpregnancy.com](http://www.Americanpregnancy.com) recommends using Bio Oil on the skin twice a day. My fitness coaches recommend coconut oil (both applied topically and taken internally). I am rotating these two products three times a day. With twins, I want to be extra careful! I've also read about the benefits of olive oil as it contains a substance called squalene, which is a chemical similar to sebum that acts as a softener and an antioxidant.

What I think is super important, and most often underestimated, is the power of hydration from the inside. Since stretch marks do not occur on the outer layer of skin, but on the second, underlying layer, what we put into our bodies could be almost more important than what we put on our bodies. It is recommended that we drink six to eight eight-ounce glasses of water every day. I, however, am drinking at least 3 liters a day, striving for 4. And coffee, tea and caffeinated soda do not count! Caffeine is a diuretic,



which means it makes you urinate, causing you to lose hydration. Again, this can make the skin less elastic and dry (think of that old rubber band!).

Source: Stretchmarkinstitute.com

## NUTRITION

**PROLINE AND LYSINE** – Collagen fibers themselves are made from protein, particularly hydroxylysine and hydroxyproline. Hence, eating foods high in lysine and proline may be beneficial for collagen production, although there have not been studies to confirm this theory. These are primarily found in animal protein. Egg whites are particularly high in proline.

**VITAMIN C** – In order for the body to synthesize protein, it needs vitamin C. Vitamin C is mainly found in all citrus fruits and in red peppers, among many other fruits and vegetables.

**PHYTONUTRIENTS** – Other nutrients which promote healthy collagen are the phytonutrients catechins and anthocyanidins. Catechins help prevent the breakdown of collagen while anthocyanidins help the fibers link together. Green tea is high in catechins and deeply pigmented fruits such as cherries and blueberries are high in anthocyanidins.

**ZINC** – Zinc works with proteins in the body to regenerate tissue by increasing the synthesis of new collagen. It is essential for connective tissue health. The best food source of zinc is oysters but other sources include chicken, beans, nuts, and other lean meat.

**EFA'S AND OTHER FAT** – Essential Fatty Acids, or EFA's, reduce inflammation. As the skin stretches, it is stressed. Keeping the skin pliable and reducing inflammation both prevent stretch marks. Sources of EFA's include tuna, salmon and sardines (wild only, not farmed), fish oils (cod liver oil), flax and chia seed (if you buy pre-ground it is often rancid- buy whole and grind yourself), wheat germ, nuts and nut oils (walnuts are the best), and leafy greens (plus spinach). Dietary fat plays a big role in the integrity of every cell. Fats carry the important skin nutrients vitamins A, D, and E. Saturated fats provide the building blocks for hormones. They are also important for mineral absorption. These fats are found in animal proteins.

**VITAMIN A** – The application of vitamin A to the skin has been found to increase collagen synthesis. Eating Vitamin A is essential for the repair of skin tissue. Foods high in vitamin A include carrots and sweet potatoes, among other orange veggies.

**VITAMIN E** - Vitamin E strengthens the skin's

elasticity. Foods rich in E are blueberries, avocados, mangoes, leafy green vegetables, nuts, and certain oils.

**B VITAMINS** - Biotin is a building block of skin cells. Eggs, bananas, and rice are such foods. Niacin is a B vitamin that enables the skin to keep moisture. Poultry, fish, beef, nuts and seeds are high in niacin.

**COPPER** - Copper helps produce elastin. Cashews, brazil nuts, poppy and sunflower seeds are excellent sources of copper. So are cereal, meats and fish.

## CIRCULATION

There are many natural remedies to improve circulation. Some helpful herbs and habits include:

- Exercise
- Massage
- Dry skin brushing
- Herbs such as Ginkgo Biloba and calendula
- Cayenne pepper, ginger, and garlic
- Avoid cigarettes which impairs blood flow
- Eliminate food allergies to improve nutrient absorption

\*Source ThePrimalParent.com

### Bottom Line:

In the fight to maintain my skin's beauty, water and all the right nutrients are essential. The answer seems to be simple: internal moisturizing is just as important as any topical oil or cream. There are so many healthy foods to eat in the list above that I don't think I have room for any junk! Stretch marks form from the inside out. Remember, you are what you eat!! Hydrate and nourish the body with water and whole foods. Get rid of junk foods and dehydrating liquids. But easier said than done. It is often hard to say no to little goodies and treats, especially when everyone says, "C'mon you're pregnant!" But in the end, beautiful skin is worth it. ♡



# Newborns & Books

by Holly Engel-Smothers

Holly Engel-Smothers is the author of *Boosting Your Baby's Brain Power*

**M**y literacy mantra is, "You can never start too early." Experts agree that the earlier a baby is read to, the better. Research shows that your babies can hear muffled sounds of the outside world while still in the womb beginning at 7 months. Your baby can hear and remember a song or story heard several times in utero up to a year after birth! So begin reading when your babies are still growing inside your womb. Read just a few books. In this early stage of literacy, it is more fun to read your heart-felt favorites or from a magazine, than the bills. It is the sound of your voice that matters during this early, early period of your twins' lives.

As newborns, keep reading time with your little bitty ones short but frequent. A goal time to shoot for is five times a day for about five minutes if your sweethearts are alert. You can change the reading time as you pick up on your babies' cues: fussing and looking away are an indicator that reading time is over. Calm breathing, focusing on the reader's face, quietness are indicators that reading time can continue. During sleepy times, go ahead and read from Mother Goose's Big Book, or another book you love.

Once your family has settled in a bit, set up a routine that includes snuggles, smiles, and serenity during reading time. Turn off the music and TV so your babies can focus on the lilt of your voice, the joy you express while reading, and the sounds and rhythms made in your particular language. Turn off the phone as well. (Picture a tender time with your baby that suddenly gets interrupted by the shrill ring of the phone. What a way to ruin the mood!) Before starting, change your little sweeties' diapers, wrap

them up in a warm blanket. You can hold your twins during story time or set them in their bouncy seats and sit or lay by them. This teaches your babes that book time is "love-y" time, cozy time, happy time, and the ever important bonding time.

It is not true that babies can only see black and white. What they see is contrasts in vivid colors. Some examples: a bright green frog on a light blue background, a brown cat on a yellow background, a ceiling fan against a white background. Keep this in mind when choosing books.

As well, newborn babies can clearly see faces and items that are 8-12 inches from their faces. Nature has this built in as the distance between your face and your twins' faces during feeding, which allows for one way to bond. Let's take this cue from nature: when reading, hold the book slightly away from their faces.





You do not necessarily have to hold the book so the twins can see the picture at this early age. In fact, the thing that young babies stare at the most are faces that are in their “sight zone,” 8-12 inches from their faces – that usually means mom, dad, grandparent, or caregiver.

When visiting the library, ask for help finding the “Board Book” section. Since your babies are simply listening and not manipulating or chewing the book, the library is a super way for you to get to know what kinds of books are available before you buy books that your babies will eventually chew on, bang, and sleep with.

Your newborn twins have no idea what you are actually reading to them until several months later, but don’t let that deter you or con you into thinking that reading is unnecessary at this time. Reading to your little cutie-pies lets them hear a lot of human speech. Each time your babies hears a particular word or song, their memories are built up in the brain. Eventually these memories, or “brain

connections,” become strong enough to create a skill and move the twins forward to achieving another language milestone.

Looking down the language development timeline, if a baby is not spoken to directly, or read to frequently and early, she may miss the opportunity to reach each continuous timeline skill. Missing one milestone backs up the language advances your baby should be making.

Although you may have heart connections to a few certain books (i.e., *The Runaway Bunny*, *Bunny my Honey*, *Guess How Much I Love You*, *Goodnight Moon*) there are tons of Board Books. These books are “stiff as a board and light as a feather.” While feeding your babies, simply lay the book beside you and read. The pages are easy to turn and are actually made so that when you read one page, the next page pops up slightly to ensure that little ones with little fingers can grasp and turn it. The objective in this case is to allow your babies to hear your voice repeating the same few books. When the next literacy stage comes along, the books you read to your muffins are the ones that will be their favorites.

Gather some Mother Goose or Nursery Rhymes books. The sing-song, rhyme structure is another way to “turn on” your babies’ brain. The more language your babies hear in diverse ways, the better. Sing-song, tickle songs, lullabies all fall under the category of developing early literacy because these are all ways your baby hears and comprehends language.

There is no need to rush to build your own army of books. As with all things twins, easy does it. Request bookstore gift certificates, books, or nursery rhyme CDs for gifts. Pick out books that you like, because, as your twins grow, they will want their favorite books read over and over again.

And their favorite books will soon become your favorite books! 





# hiking with twins?

by Melinda Rhodes

**S**ummertime and the livin' is easy. Ha! Let's face it: at times nothing seems easy with twin toddlers in tow. It may seem like a daunting task to take your dynamic duo hiking, but it doesn't have to be. With a little planning and preparation it can be a fun activity for the whole family and a great way to introduce children to nature.

If you're not sure how much your twins can handle yet, just let them set the pace. You may be surprised by how fast and how far their little legs will carry them. Whenever my almost 2-year-old son's feet hit the dirt he yells, "Let's go, go, gooo!" and takes off at the speed of light. Once they have mastered walking, most toddlers can handle hiking short distances—about a half mile or so—on relatively even terrain. They will love traversing small rises and falls but can't yet handle steep climbs. For longer hikes, you will need to invest in child carriers for your twins.

## CHOOSE THE RIGHT PACK

Prices of child carriers range from \$80 upwards to about \$300. If you are only planning on going one or two short hikes, you can most likely get by with the less expensive models. If you plan on going on hikes longer than about two miles, however, I would recommend purchasing a higher-end pack made by Deuter or Kelty. True, this is a lot of money (especially times two!), but purchasing the right carrier is critical, particularly when hiking with twins. If you don't select one that is ergonomically designed to fit both parents and children, your back will ache and, unlike parents of singletons, you usually don't have the option of handing your precious cargo off to someone else. My husband and I learned this the hard way. We used three different brands before finding one that was truly comfortable for all of us. It's a good idea to take your twins to a sporting goods store with you to try out the packs before you hit the trail. Some of



the features that we found to be worth paying a little extra for were:

- Adjustable torso length
- Padded hip belt
- Breathable child seat
- Storage for hydration reservoir
- Side pockets for sippy cups
- Sun/rain hood (sold as an accessory on most models)
- Child-view mirror (also sold as an accessory on most models)

## PLAN FLEXIBLE TRIPS

There are many resources to help you plan a twin-friendly hiking trip. The National Park website, [nps.gov](http://nps.gov), breaks hikes down into three categories—easy, moderate and difficult—making it a snap to pick an age-appropriate hike. Many trails have optional side spurs that can extend your hike if your twins are agreeable. Trails.com, a pay subscription service, allows you to search for hikes in your area based on key words such as “child-friendly.” If you prefer a guide book, Mountaineers Books publishes Hiking with Children series for a number of different states and Falcon Books also has a line called Best Easy Day Hikes. Once you choose your route, it’s easy to get caught up in the destination. But with twin toddlers you need to remain flexible. Remember to slow down and see the world through their eyes. They are just as interested—if not more—in the blossoms and branches and bugs (oh, my!) along the way as they are in what lies at the end of the trail. Let them out of their packs every so often to stretch their legs and explore their surroundings.

## PACK EXTRA GEAR

As a seasoned parent of multiples you already pack extra diapers and approximately 816 diaper wipes for any outing.

But don’t forget to bring an old towel or changing pad as I have yet to encounter a Koala Care station in the woods. You will also need some Ziploc bags to pack the dirty diapers out in. Plenty of snacks and water are also a must. Even if you think it will just be a short hike, be sure to pack lunch as well. With twin toddlers, you never know how long they will stop along the way to play and explore. You should also bring a change of clothes for those “monkey-see-monkey-do” moments like jumping in a mud puddle or smearing jelly all over their pants. Even in the summer you should pack jackets because mountain weather can change unexpectedly. Other hiking essentials include a compass, first aid kit, mosquito repellent, and sunscreen. It goes without saying that you need to apply sunscreen to every inch of your kids’ bare skin. But even if they are wearing pants you should apply some to their legs. Pants tend to ride up when they are in the child carrier, exposing previously covered skin.

## KEEP IT FUN

The most important thing to remember when hiking with your twins is to keep it fun! Point out all of the cool, colorful and creepy-crawly things along the way. Make up a silly song about your journey or even jump off logs and rocks with them. The memories you make will last a lifetime.

We have been hiking with our twins Brayden and McKenzie since they were 9-months old and now they are almost two. We really enjoy this quality time we spend with them and as a family. ♡

## Editor’s pick:

We love the Twingo Carrier ([twingocarrier.com](http://twingocarrier.com)) because it can be worn as a dual carrier or divided into two separate carriers!







# TWIN-PROOFING YOUR BACKYARD

by Michelle LaRowe

If you've ever put your toddling twins to bed in separate cribs, only to find them fast asleep in the same one, you've become accustomed to how Houdini like your pair can be. With a partner to boost her into unsafe places, dare him to dive off the swing set and tempt each other to walk the line of danger, it's no surprise that with double the fingers and double the toes to track, keeping your twins safe as they play outdoors this summer can be twice the work. So as you prepare to transform your backyard into a summer playground, follow these twin-proofing guidelines to cut back on the hidden hazards in your backyard and make your play zone a safe place to be.

## CAREFULLY INSPECT YOUR PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

According to the National Program for Playground Safety over 200,000 children per year are injured on playgrounds. Since most of these injuries are a result of falls, be sure that you have a proper shock absorbing

surface underneath your play set. 12 inches of sand, mulch or rubber matting will offer your twins the best protection. You'll also want to be sure that your play set is properly anchored to the ground, that surfaces are smooth, that protruding bolts are repaired and that all "S" shaped hooks are fully closed. Check your slide for any sharp edges and be sure that there is a clear exit area for sliders.

## THINK TWICE ABOUT TRAMPOLINES

If the nearly 250,000 trampoline injuries reported each year (according to the American Association of Orthopedic Surgeons) has not convinced you to steer clear of this backyard accessory, if you opt to purchase a trampoline for your twins, be sure it is a spring-less model that has a full safety enclosure. Since a majority of trampoline injuries occur from children colliding with other jumpers, it's vitally important to continuously supervise your twins at play.



## SANDBOX SAFETY

If your sandbox is built directly on the ground, be sure to line it with landscape fabric to prevent weeds from growing up and to facilitate water drainage. You'll also want to fill your sandbox with "sandbox sand." Sold at home improvement stores, sandbox sand is smoother and cleaner than regular sand. You'll also need to invest in a cover to keep pets and rodents (and their droppings!) out. Place a five gallon bucket upside down in your sandbox and properly secure a plastic tarp onto the sandbox. The bucket will prevent water from pooling on the top of the tarp which can be a safety issue for your twins and a breeding ground for bugs.

## LANDSCAPE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

Your twins are naturally curious and won't hesitate to explore. Be sure all power equipment and lawn treatment products are stored and secured in a locked shed.

## DECKS AND FENCES

Be sure to measure the space between the railing slots on your deck. If they are wide enough for your twins to trap a limb, utilize safety netting. You'll also want to be sure a hard mounted gate is attached to the top and bottom of the stairs. Also check all your fences for loose hardware, splinters and missing slats. Be sure pickets are less than five inches apart and that there are no sharp edges for your twins to get caught on.

## OUTDOOR FURNITURE & OUTDOOR OUTLETS

Be sure your outdoor seating is sturdy and safe. Secure garden swings properly to the ground and check to ensure cushions are securely fastened to seating. Replace outdoor outlet covers with childproof outlet covers that your twins can't open.



## POOLS

Be sure your pool is properly barricaded. Install a fence that is at least four feet tall and be sure that there are no weak areas that your twins can squeeze through. Be sure the gate has a self-locking mechanism that your twins can't open. You may also want to invest in a gate or pool alarm that will alert you if the gate has been opened or if someone falls into the pool. Remove steps and ladders when the pool isn't in use (and keep step stools and ladders away from all fences). Never leave the cover halfway on your pool, as your child could swim under and become stuck. If your patio door leads directly to the pool, lock and alarm it. Inflatable pools should be drained, deflated and stored and secured when not in use.

## KOI PONDS

Fish ponds pose a special backyard hazard for children as their shallow depth can give parents, children and caregivers a false sense of security. Be sure pools of water of any depth are properly barricaded to prevent unauthorized access.

## BBQS AND GRILLS

When not in use, store and secure grilling equipment. Propane tanks, matches, lighter fluid and sharp cooking utensils should all be inaccessible to your twins. When in use, never leave the cooking area unsupervised and be sure that the unit is cooled completely before storing away.

## CLOTHING

Require your twins to wear proper footwear and snug fit clothing when playing outdoors. Avoid articles of clothing with drawstrings or accessories that can easily become caught on play equipment.

## ESTABLISH CLEAR BOUNDARIES AND RULES

Having a list of backyard rules can help guide your twins in safe play. Establish any areas that are off limits, rules for riders on slides, trampolines and other play toys and safety guidelines for using play equipment. While twin-proofing your backyard can help eliminate common safety hazards and create a safer environment for your twins to play in, even the best safety measures do not substitute for parental supervision. ♡

# TRAVEL TIPS FOR ROAD TRIPS WITH TWINNS



by Steven Jeffries

**M**y wife Lisa and I have been planning and doing road trips with our twins since they were nine months old. That first trip to Niagara Falls was my bad idea, but it, at least, taught me a great deal about what you need to do, both to prepare for a road trip, and how to make it successful. Just as many things can be more complicated or challenging with twins or higher order multiples, a road trip is no different. These tips for both organizing and during a road trip should help make these summer family ventures more enjoyable.

There are several ways to save your family money when planning a road trip with twins. The Entertainment Book, which is available at [www.entertainment.com](http://www.entertainment.com) and from some charitable organizations, offers discounts on restaurants, hotels, attractions,

and even car rentals. Over the years we have saved hundreds of dollars using it on vacations, as well as locally. You can buy books for most North American cities for about 25 or 30 dollars each annually. American and Canadian Automobile Association memberships (AAA / CAA) also include savings at hotels, motels, and attractions. [Tripadvisor.com](http://Tripadvisor.com) won't save you money directly, but it will give you an idea of whether you are getting good value. Trip Advisor ranks hotels and restaurants based on user reviews. Reviewers rate the property on value and often comment on this. You can even read only the reviews written about family travel to narrow your focus.

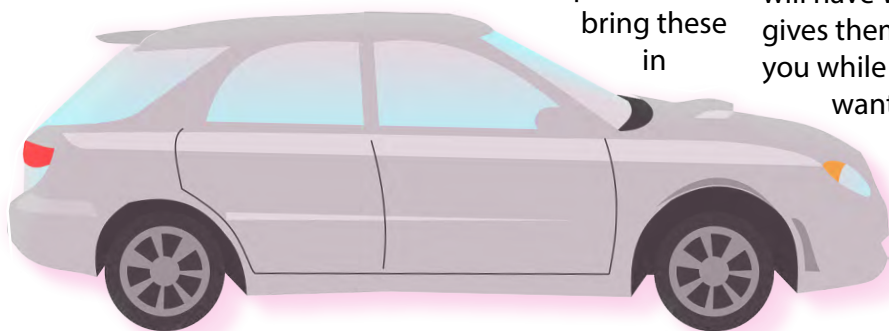
Plan ahead! Start off by making a list of everything you will be bringing. My wife not only



does this, she checks off each item as it is packed, and if it is an annual or regular trip such as our family takes to the cottage, then she revises the list on her computer. She also highlights items that still need to be purchased. When our twins were very young, obviously things like diapers were on this list. The toys or travel games you will bring will likely change. And even the need for a stroller or a portable play apparatus will not be needed as the kids grow older. It is also important to be aware of things such as your children's nap (if applicable) and bed times and try to plan travel around these as much as possible. Since you are driving, think of where you might stop to eat and/or for washroom breaks. A GPS, if you have one, may be able to help in this regard. Smart phones and tablets have apps that can find the nearest restaurant or gas station. My personal favourite travel app is "Timmy's Me" which locates the nearest Tim Horton's (a Canadian and northern US fast food and coffee chain) location and can even narrow the list down to the drive thru locations only. The AAA and CAA still offer map routes and flip chart style directions from any point in North America to another if you are a member. My wife and I always pack a small thermal bag and stuff it with such healthy snacks as granola bars, fruit bites or bars, and bottled water to quell the kids' hungry and thirsty moments, no matter where we are on the route.

Dollar store toys can be a great tool to occupy the kids, especially when unpacking at your destination. We take one or two trips to Niagara Falls each year, and we sometimes buy each child a small toy from the dollar store to give to them upon arrival. We also bought a cheap portable DVD player with two headphones, and although we don't use it in the car, it does come in handy when unpacking at the hotel or just for some quiet down time. We also ask the kids to choose a few small books to bring

on the trip, and even  
bring these  
in



with us to restaurants. They are perfect for while you are waiting to order, or for your food. And speaking of eating at restaurants, another tip is to ask for the bill when the food arrives so you can pay it promptly if need be.

Strollers should be approached on a trip by trip basis. It really depends on a few factors. An important factor is how much you might use the stroller and for what purposes. One thing that you might not have thought about is how dependent or not your kids are on a stroller. And in certain situations, cost may also be a factor. We had a large, heavy, and expensive Mountain Buggy Urban Double and two small, cheap umbrella strollers. We rarely used the last two items. When we went to the cottage, the large double stroller was a must. We would take long walks in the countryside with it. We packed it into the back of our vehicle, on top of all our other luggage, and baby equipment. But when we travelled to Disney World when our twins were about to turn four, they didn't want to be in a stroller anymore. After much debate, we took a chance and considered renting a double stroller at the parks at over \$30 a day. But after testing the kids out by walking in the Magic Kingdom on day one, we never did rent a stroller on that trip. We sold the double stroller shortly afterwards.

Have the kids help you pack their stuff as much as you can. When our twins were only two or three years old, we would get them to select a stuffed animal to bring along with a couple of other toys that would go in the suitcase. Our twins now help choose their clothes each day for school and so we let them choose some for when we are going away as well. They can also pick out such items as beach towels and pajamas. As I mentioned in an earlier tip, we also let them choose a DVD to bring, if we are bringing the portable player. The more they feel included in the packing, the fewer problems you will have when you are at your destination. This also gives them something to do rather than bother you while you are trying to pack up. You might also want to pack them a separate suitcase so you don't have to rummage through your own clothes, to get their stuff out. This strategy further allows you to pack your own clothes and necessities at your convenience. Happy twin travelling! ♡

# TWINS<sup>TM</sup> STROLLER GUIDE

A round-up of the best strollers and joggers for twins available in 2017.



## PEG PEREGO BOOK FOR TWO

*\$649.99 on Amazon*

Suitable for twins from 0-36 months, with a height adjustable handle. The Book for Two has separate reclinable backrests and a 5-point safety harness.

Its main selling point is that it fits through standard width doors easily, but some users have complained that they cannot fit through standard doors while the double car seat adapter is attached.

## CONTOURS OPTIONS ELITE TANDEM STROLLER

*\$399.99 on Amazon*

The Options Elite tandem stroller is one of the most flexible and durable strollers on the market at the moment. It supports children up to 40lbs (80lbs total) and has a lot of storage space underneath. The stroller is heavier than most others to carry and does not fit into smaller cars when folded.



## JOOVY SCOOTER X2

*From \$184.99 on Amazon*

The Joovy Scooter X2 has a very narrow design that even fits through the checkout aisle at the grocery store!

Don't let price fool you: this budget option is a sure win with its huge storage space... not to mention how great it looks!



## MACLAREN TWIN TECHNO

€495 from Maclaren Baby

The Maclaren Twin Techno is suitable for newborns and children up to 55lbs (110lbs total). It is easy to open and close and has adjustable footrests and a five-point reclining system. The rain hoods are water resistant and larger than most other strollers.



## VALCO BABY SNAP DUO TAILORMADE

\$549.99 on ABABY

The Snap Duo is definitely one of the most lightweight strollers around at the moment, and features a "toddler proof" harness buckle to keep little ones in their seats. There is ample storage with a pocket on the back of each seat, and has a "flip-flop friendly" braking feature!

## BABY JOGGER CITY MINI GT DOUBLE STROLLER

\$579.99 on BabyJogger

The main selling point of the City Mini GT is the patented quick fold technology that allows you to fold the stroller with one hand, which saves valuable time with two little ones. It also handles gravel easily and has a hand-operated brake.



## JOOVY TWIN ROO+ STROLLER FRAME

\$139.99 on Joovy

The TwinRoo+ stroller frame is the best thing since sliced bread for parents of infant twins. Simply click in your car seats and you're ready to go - no need to wake the babies if they're sleeping. Plus there's enough storage space for a large diaper bag, blanket, toys and more!



## CHICCO ECHO TWIN STROLLER

*\$189.99 on ChiccoShop*

This stroller is great for taller parents, though if you're a little on the shorter side you might want to give it a miss. Some users have said that the Chicco Echo Twin Stroller can be heavy and difficult to turn, but it is one of the few double strollers that fits in a hybrid trunk.



## GRACO FASTACTION FOLD DUO

*\$299.99 on Graco*

The Graco Fastaction Fold Duo can hold two up to 50lbs each, so if you want a stroller that will last for a few years, then this is the one. It comes complete with cup-holders for mommy and babies, and its lockable front-swivel wheels with suspension makes this stroller steer easily and gives your little ones a smooth ride.

## UPPABABY VISTA DOUBLE

*\$1,059.98 on Amazon*

This is the most expensive stroller on our list, but it is also the most adaptable. This stroller can grow with your little ones — start off with bassinets and switch them for rumble seats as they develop!



## BOB REVOLUTION FLEX DUALLIE

*\$575.99 on Amazon*

The BOB Revolution Flex Duallie is great for all terrains — it handles well on grass, gravel and broken pavements. The adjustable handle makes this a great choice for parents with a large height difference.



## PHIL AND TEDS VOYAGER WITH DOUBLES KIT

*\$849.98 on Amazon*

Phil and Teds Voyager stroller is on the pricier side of this list, but it is built to last and its adaptable seats will see your twins from birth all the way through to 3+. It also folds up small enough to fit in most cars.



## GUZZIE & GUSS TWICE

*\$299.99 on Amazon*

The Guzzie & Guss Twice stroller is another heavy one, but this just makes it all the more sturdy. This one seems to be slightly easier to turn than a lot of other umbrella strollers on the market at the moment. However, if you are tall, then this perhaps isn't the stroller for you — the handles are short and can't be adjusted.

## BABY TREND EXPEDITION DOUBLE

*\$161.49 at Walmart*

This stroller is great for parents on a budget. The seats can hold children up to 50lbs each, and has a multi-position seat recline. The wheels can handle all terrains and the storage under the seats can fit four lightweight bags of groceries with ease.



## THULE URBAN GLIDE 2

*\$649.95 on Thule*

The Thule Urban Glide does exactly what it says on the tin: it glides. It's lightweight and easy to push, and the canopies have a view-in roof so you can see your twins as you're walking. Some users have reported that their children overheat in this stroller, so it's best for cooler climates.





# Slide Into Summer Safety

## Tips for a fun, safe summer

by Family Features

Summer is a time for playground fun, camping, boating, swimming, biking and other outdoor activities. Longer days mean more time outside and more physical activity, which translates to increased potential for injuries. Playground falls, lawnmower accidents, campfire and fire pit burns are some common childhood injuries that can happen during summer months.

“Sustaining a serious injury can be a life-altering event for a child,” said Chris Smith, Chairman of the Board of Directors for Shriners Hospitals for Children®. “We see patients every day with injuries caused by accidents and we are committed to raising awareness about how to stay safe.”

These tips from Shriners Hospitals for Children can help your family enjoy a fun, injury-free summer.

### GO OUTSIDE AND PLAY

Outdoor play provides physical and mental health benefits, including opportunities for exercise, creative expression, stress reduction and access to a free and natural source of vitamin D – sunlight. Before sending kids out to play, make sure they are wearing shoes to protect their feet from cuts, scrapes and splinters, and

wearing sunscreen to protect against sunburns and harmful ultraviolet rays.

### PLAYGROUND 101

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that emergency departments treat more than 200,000 children ages 14 and younger every year for playground-related injuries. Before your kids head to the playground, keep these precautions in mind:

- Choose parks and playgrounds that are appropriate for their age and offer shock-absorbing surfaces.
- Teach children that pushing and shoving on the playground can result in accidents and injuries.
- Remind kids to go down the slide one at a time and to wait until the slide is completely clear before taking their turn. Teach them to always sit facing forward with their legs straight in front of them and to never slide down headfirst.
- Remind children to swing sitting down. Encourage them to wait until the swing stops before getting off and to be careful when walking in front of moving swings.



## MAKE A SAFE SPLASH

While playing poolside may be a blast, Safe Kids Worldwide reports that drowning is the leading cause of injury-related deaths for children ages 1-4 and the third-leading cause of injury-related deaths among those under 19. Additionally, the University of Michigan Health Systems estimate that about 6,000 kids under the age of 14 are hospitalized because of diving injuries each year, with 1 in 5 sustaining a spinal cord injury.

Prevent accidents and injuries with these tips to ensure your family's safety around water:

- Instruct children to never swim alone or go near water without an adult present.
- Give children your undivided attention when they are swimming or near any body of water.
- Always jump in feet first to check the depth before diving into any body of water.
- Never dive in the shallow end of the pool or into above-ground pools.

## FUN ON THE WATER

Boating, tubing and other water sports can be great fun but can also be dangerous. According to the U.S. Coast Guard, nearly 71 percent of all boating fatalities are drownings, 85 percent of which are a result of not wearing a life jacket. Here is what you can do to enjoy the water safely:

- Always have children wear a Coast Guard-approved, properly fitted life jacket while on a boat, around an open body of water or when participating in water sports.
- Educate yourself. According to the U.S. Coast Guard, 86 percent of boating accident deaths involve boaters who have not completed a safety course.
- Always check water conditions and forecasts before going out on the water.

## FIRE SAFETY SIMPLIFIED

According to the CDC, more than 300 children ages 19 and under are treated in emergency rooms for fire- and burn-related injuries each day. Use these tips to help keep children safe around fires, fireworks, grills and other heat sources:

- Teach kids to never play with matches, gasoline, lighter fluid or lighters. Make a habit of placing these items out of the reach of young children.

- Do not leave children unattended near grills, campfires, fire pits or bonfires. Always have a bucket of water or fire extinguisher nearby whenever there is an open flame.
- Take your child to a doctor or hospital immediately if he or she is injured in a fire or by fireworks.
- Leave fireworks to the professionals.

To see more tips, find activity pages and learn how to become a "Superhero of Summer Safety," visit [shriners-hospitalsforchildren.org/safesummer](http://shriners-hospitalsforchildren.org/safesummer). ♡

## WHEN THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENS

It was a beautiful, sunny day when Jordan Nerski headed to the playground with his mother, like millions of other kids on summer vacation. One minute Jordan was climbing on the jungle gym and the next he was on the ground with a broken elbow.

Accidents like these are why emergency room doctors and staff refer to the summer months as "trauma season." During these warm, action-packed months, kids spend more hours active and outdoors, often without adult supervision, increasing the chance of injury. When these accidents occur, parents want the best care possible for their children.

Jordan's mother Jackie received a recommendation from a friend who suggested that she bring her son to the Shriners Hospital for Children — Portland walk-in fracture clinic.

"The experience we had was truly amazing," Jackie Nerski said. "It was a stressful time since he was in a lot of pain, but everyone from the greeter at check-in to the doctor made it the best experience."

A simple and streamlined process, Jordan, equipped with an X-ray documenting his break, was checked-in at the fracture clinic, treated and casted in under 2 hours. Jordan returned with his mother for follow-up visits to ensure his elbow was healing properly and they found every visit to be stress-free and informative.

"At each visit, every care was taken for his comfort and to answer all my questions to appease my anxiety," Jackie Nerski said. "It was an experience that was fantastic; though one I hope we don't need again, but if we do, we know where to go."

Including the Portland location, there are 22 Shriners Hospitals for Children in the United States, Canada and Mexico that provide specialized care to children with orthopedic conditions, burns, spinal cord injuries and cleft lip and palate, regardless of the families' ability to pay. Of these 22 hospitals, 13 also offer walk-in fracture clinics.





# *The Best 5* **EXERCISES** *to do with* **TWINS**

by Shirley Wilson

The type of training you will get done in the following suggestions will also depend on your children and the kinds of twins you have.

Active twins will be happy to join you. In fact, they won't hesitate to start the exercise and take it far from its course. They are usually the first to get into the exercise and the last one out of it!

Non-active twins are those quiet ones who would rather be listening to you read or maybe enjoying watching the rain or playing with your animal.

Helping your child and coaxing them to do the exercise with you will be of great benefit to you and them. Building an active life is important for future nutrition and exercising routines.

You want to make this fun and enjoyable, if you look like you're having fun then so will your children. Make sure you set the example and show that you want their engagement and company during the exercise!



## #1: RUNNING AND WALKING

Taking your children walking with you through the park or by a lake or anywhere is a wonderful way to get them out and about. Try taking a break when you see that they need it and bring some water for hydration.

If walking isn't something you're enjoying with your children and would rather be running but your children can't keep up, you should invest in the double jogging stroller. This will provide your twins with a comfortable place to sit and play with each other, while you get your exercise in. Running with your children will also encourage the behavior when they can do it with you.

You should pack a picnic to enjoy for lunch. Try even having your twins help you pack it with all their favorite fruits, veggies, and sandwiches.

## #2: AEROBICS

Aerobics is fun for people of all ages, whether they are two or ninety-two! Aerobics gets you up and active, and it makes exercising fun. Jumping around, twisting, and pumping your muscles energizes you and your twins!

Your twins will love the ability to incorporate whatever they want to. Aerobics is an exercise that gives your young twins the freedom to express themselves, not to mention the outfits you can put together!

## #3: YOGA

Yoga frees the mind and helps you to gain peace and serenity within. Yoga looks complicated for some, but just starting out; you learn how to develop yourself further to increase stamina and flexibility to improve your exercises.

Yoga also looks intriguing to children of all ages. The young twins don't understand what you're doing but want to try with you, while older twins think it looks neat and will want to try doing it with you.

What's great about including your older twins in Yoga is gaining partners for encouragement and you and your children bonding over the activity together.

## #4: DANCE

Dancing is something that is fun, exciting, and can always change to fit whatever your mood made be! Everyone loves to dance, even if they can't (and I know I can't!), but it's fun! There is a wide variety of programs to choose from, or you can just turn on music and follow routines from websites.

There are a lot of places to find videos and tutorials on dance routines that are great for weight loss, multiple people, and different themes! By the time you finish dance routines, you'll be the new life of the party!


## #5: SWIMMING

Introducing your children to swimming at young ages is good for their bodies and helps them learn to swim faster. You can find floaties and life jackets that keep your child's head above water and have them swim around the pool with you.

Swimming will increase your stamina and increase weight loss. Taking your twins with you can help create a love for water and an interest in swimming in their future.

## CREATING AN ACTIVE MINDSET

Active children are healthier, more social, and know how to handle their emotions better. They tend to do better in school, are more open with their parents, and eat healthier. These few benefits are wonderful for your children and their future.

You will not only lose weight and become fitter, but you also open a door with your twins. Your kids will confide in you, talk to you, and tell you about their lives. They'll question the world around them, form opinions, and be more open-minded. The bond you will make between you and your twins will amaze you. 





# TAKING YOUNG TWINS TO Disney World It's All in the Planning

by Steven Jeffries

**M**y wife Lisa told me a story about the last time she had been to Disney World as a young adult in the early nineties. She told her father at the time, "The next time I come back here, I'm coming here with my kids." Little did she know, it would be with nearly four year old twins. As for me, I had not been to Orlando's Disney World since I was a teenager in 1982. Epcot had just opened, and there was no Animal Kingdom or Hollywood Studios at the time. But both my wife and I wanted to take our twins, Joshua and Abigail, about to turn four at the time, at a young age but not too young as to not remember anything or appreciate it.

It is one thing to plan to take young children, but as multiple parents know, twins or other multiples always provide their unique challenges that don't always apply with different aged siblings, so planning for Disney World had its own series of questions to be answered. Hopefully, my research, discussions, decisions, and experiences will help answer some of your questions and assist you in better planning your trip, should you decide to go. One thing is for certain, you do need to plan for Disney World. Just showing up and

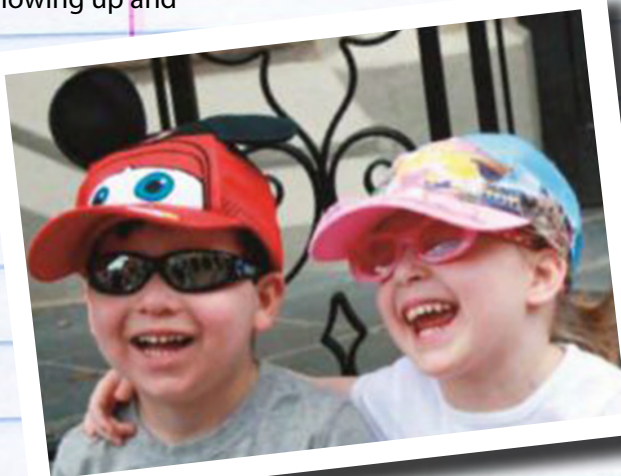
hoping to enjoy one's self fully doesn't really work, with so many options, and limited time and resources.

## GUIDEBOOKS AND WEBSITES

There are many invaluable guidebooks and much of the information was garnered from the ones that I read. I started by checking out a few from the library to see which ones were the most helpful. You won't usually find one for the current year, but try to find one as recent as possible. Most of the information will not change, and you can choose to purchase any that you find will be useful, both in your planning, and to take to the parks. The guidebooks explain all the attractions in detail, including what rides might scare young ones; suggestions for renting or bringing strollers; hotel information and recommendations for both inside and outside Disney World; and restaurant information, including character meals.

In my opinion, the one guide that is the best for preplanning is *The Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World* by Bob Sehlinger and Len Testa. It has over 800 pages of information on everything related to Disney World (and even a chapter on Universal Studios as well). The best thing about this book is that they include quotes from actual families so you get an idea of what people like yourself experienced. The best book for the parks is *The Passport's Guide to Walt Disney World* by Jennifer, Dave, and Allison C. Marx. It includes fold out maps, planning sheets, and pockets to hold information, tickets, etc.

There are many great websites with information including [allears.net](http://allears.net). Websites such as this give important information such as restaurant menus so you know whether or not there is a kids menu, and what the choices are. My son Josh does not like pizza with sauce on it, and usually wants a grilled cheese or





peanut butter sandwich. Allears.net gave us great information including the prices. The last website I want to mention is tripadvisor.com. This website provides user's reviews on hotels, restaurants and attractions, and ranks them based on how people rated them. We chose the Holiday Inn in Walt Disney World in large part due to the reviews on tripadvisor.com. Everything they said in the reviews was correct including how nice the rooms and pool were, the high level of service, and the frequency and punctuality of the shuttle to the parks.

## TRANSPORTATION ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

As we got closer to the actual trip we had a few burning questions regarding our twins. This would be their first trip on a plane and we wanted to make sure their time was occupied. At the same time we wondered whether car seats were feasible or necessary for the plane trip. In our case, because we were staying in WDW and were not renting a car, we did not have need for them. We also had our seats professionally installed and did not really want to take them out. We solved the first question through buying a couple of travel games and a portable DVD player with two headphones so they could watch together. On the plane, Abby and Josh watched the seatback TV, but in the airport they were able to watch the DVDs we brought to amuse them. This was also useful for some quiet time after a long day in the park back in the hotel room.

Two huge questions, whether you have multiples or not, are how are you getting to Orlando and where are you staying? We were flying and since our focus was entirely on Disney World, and we were staying at a hotel on the grounds, we did not need a car. However, we did need to get to and from Orlando International Airport. Through my research I discovered town car service. It works like a limousine, except



that they meet you at the baggage area, help bring your bags to the car and even provide car seats. However, I did not know that I had to install the car seats, myself and they were not very good ones at that. One of the best aspects was the fact that we could stop at a grocery store on the way to the hotel and buy drinks and snacks for the week, such as bottled water (which is expensive in WDW). My wife had already packed some snacks because, while security does check all bags entering the parks, they turn a blind eye to food and drinks. So there is me at the grocery store, dressed in my Canadian

winter jeans and sweatshirt in the Florida heat. If you actually stay at a Disney Resort, you can use their Magic Express bus service for free. But keep in mind that it has mixed reviews and many reviewers said they waited hours to get their luggage at the hotel. On the way back to the airport, we decided to use a Mears shuttle, which was cheaper and quicker, and we didn't need the car seats. Another option, of course, is to stay off the grounds in either a suite hotel or a rental condominium. With multiples, having extra room is always great, but you would definitely need a car, as most of the outside hotel shuttles to WDW are very infrequent. Also, you might want a kitchen or kitchenette to be able to save some money on meals, which are expensive in the parks.

## STROLLER OR NOT?

The question on whether to use a stroller for multiples in Disney World is really based on a number of factors. But for us, it came down to the fact that our nearly four year old twins did not like being in a stroller anymore. We have an amazing double stroller, the Mountain Buggy Urban, and we put it to great use until they were about three. We also have a couple of umbrella strollers for convenience sake. However,



Josh and Abby like to walk everywhere, including a mile long hike in Algonquin Park this past summer. We knew they wouldn't get in the umbrella strollers and we weren't planning on schlepping the Mountain Buggy on the plane.

We also knew that the shuttle bus came right to the front door of our hotel and it is hard to get strollers on these buses. In some very large Disney resorts, they recommend a stroller just to get to and from the bus stop. We decided that we would take our chances on day one and rent a double stroller from WDW if we needed it. We didn't. The kids did just fine! Double strollers rent for about \$31 US a day (slightly less if you buy multiple days) and they all look the same. Also, some areas can't be accessed with them and Disney cast members move them all the time. You have to mark your stroller with something easily identifiable such as a handkerchief or risk losing it.

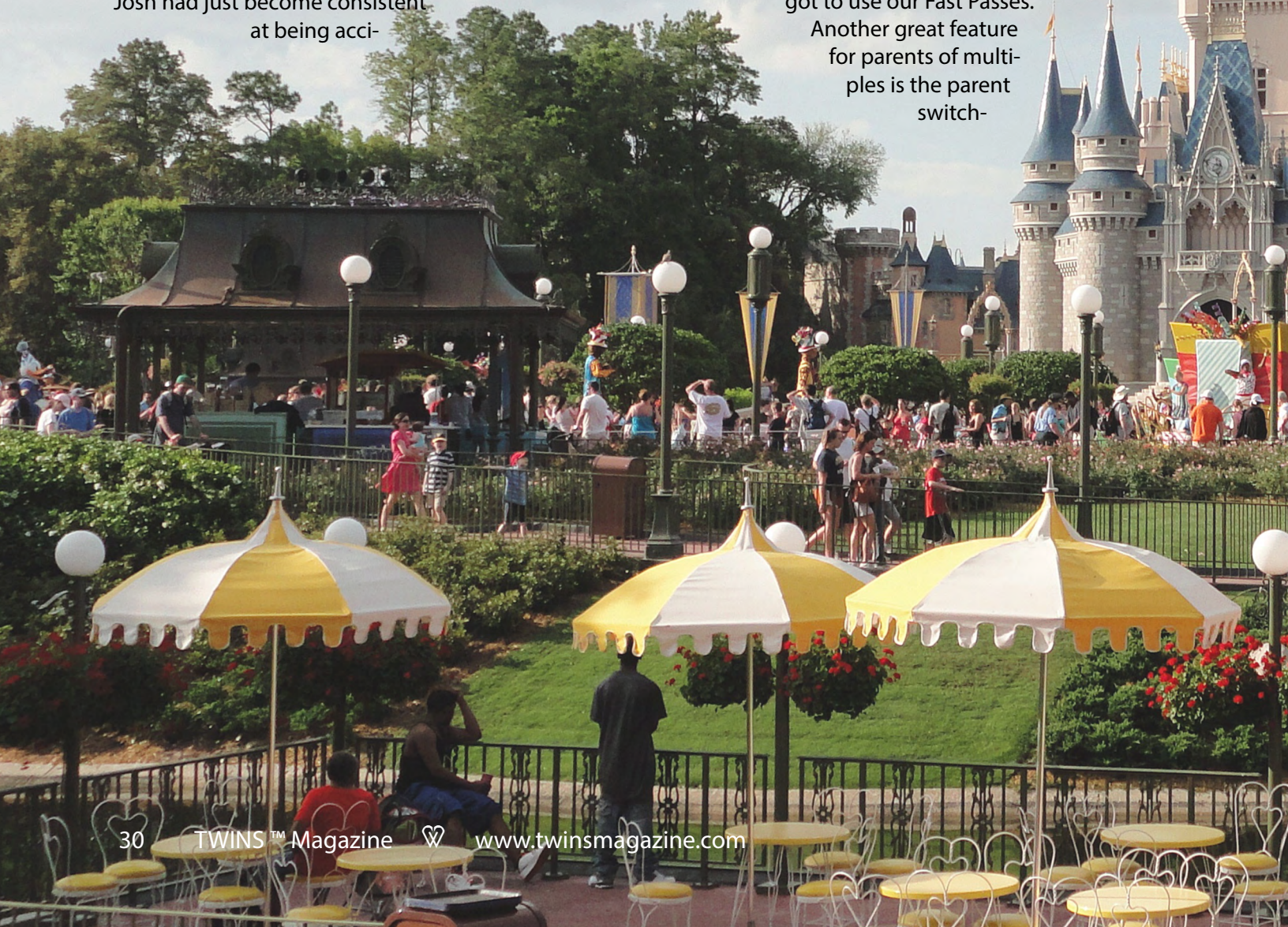
## AT THE PARKS

After the stroller, our two other concerns were with Josh and the washroom and planning for the rides. Josh had just become consistent at being acci-

dent free without pull up diapers and letting us know when he had to go to the washroom. However, at Disney World we were concerned that there might not always be a washroom available, especially during a wait in line. We debated having him wear pull-ups at the parks but decided against it because we thought it might be a big step backwards. Our decision turned out fine! Josh had only one small accident on the last day and was great about going to the washroom during breaks and before getting on to the monorail.

The guides were great help in planning for the rides, both suggesting which ones to focus on, which ones have Fast Passes, and which might have a scare factor. The Fast Pass system at WDW is excellent. You use your entry ticket to obtain a pass to come back at a specific hour block of time and move to the front of the queue. However, a colleague correctly told me that you can always come after the time allotment, just not before. This was proven at Kilimanjaro Safari in Animal Kingdom, when we got there twenty minutes late and still got to use our Fast Passes.

Another great feature for parents of multiples is the parent switch-







ing off option. Let's say only one of you wants to go on a ride, but both kids want to. Both parents line up, but at the front the first parent gets on with the first child, and the second parent waits at the front with the second child. Then when the ride is over, the kids switch places, and the second child gets to ride with the parent.

Here is one last important piece of advice. Make sure you follow your kids' ride wish list first, especially if the ride does not have a Fast Pass option. However, a mistake could create some Disney "magic" as it did for us on the first day. Josh wanted to go on the Indy Car Racetrack ride in the Magic Kingdom, but it was lunch time. We told him to wait until after lunch, but when we went over to the ride, there was an hour or so wait. He was beginning to break down and would not have lasted in the line up. My wife walked up to the nearest cast member and asked if the line would get shorter eventually. After being told it would be at least another couple of

hours, we decided to try to come back later. It was then that the cast member asked us, "How many people do you have?" My wife answered four and he immediately led us through a gate to the very front of the line! It was a magical moment we will never forget and it saved the day for us and our son.

Taking our young twins to Disney World had its share of challenges, but in the end it was well worth all the planning. If you go, here's hoping you create as many great memories as we did. ♡





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Heidi Green, mother of twins, is a well-known family and celebrity photographer specializing in kids' parties, special events, and unique family portraits. Visit her website at [www.heidigreen.com](http://www.heidigreen.com).

## HEIDI GREEN'S TOP 10 TIPS ON PHOTOGRAPHING TWINS

**1** Know your subject. Choose a location where your twins feel comfortable and at ease so that they'll be themselves. If they love to curl up at home and read their favorite book, there's your perfect setting.

**2** Use natural (sun) light as much as possible. A flash can frighten babies and young kids; add harsh shadows and produce red eye.

**3** Focus on their eyes. A sharp tight shot of their eyes is like looking into their soul.

**4** Get down low so that you're eye to eye with your subject. The shots taken from a child's perspective will be more unique and personal than those taken from above.

**5** Don't be afraid to get close to the subjects and fill the whole frame. With more active kids, this won't be easy; as an alternative, keep your distance and use a zoom lens for the same effect.

**6** Have fun and experiment with various compositions and angles. You can get a little artsy by focusing in on different body parts: hands, ears, lips, belly buttons, etc.

**7** Take tons of photos. Don't be too concerned about getting the "perfect shot". If you're patient and relaxed, there will always be some great ones in the end.

**8** Include other people and family pets in the photos. This is a great way to capture memories of your family and pets together. I'm not a fan of props, but it's a good idea

to include your child's favorite doll, ball or toy—something you'll associate with them when you look back on the photos.

**9** Choose non-distracting backgrounds. Some of the most picturesque settings are wide, green fields and well-lit rooms with simple walls and floors. If something in the background doesn't add to the photo, remove it so that the subject matter remains the focus.

**10** Be playful so that your children have fun. Make sure to capture them doing what they love most whether it's running, jumping, swimming, laughing or playing with their favorite toys. Even simple activities like coloring, watching TV, eating and sleeping can produce beautiful, intimate photos.



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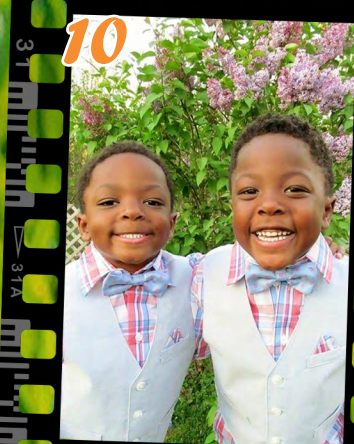
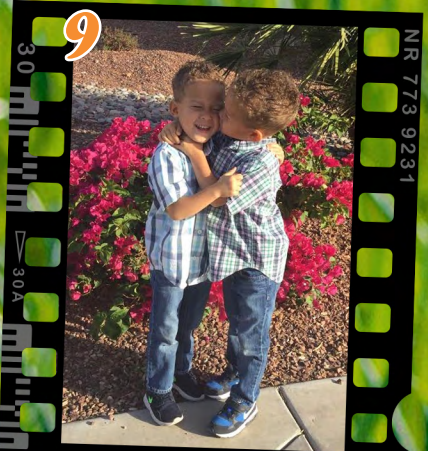
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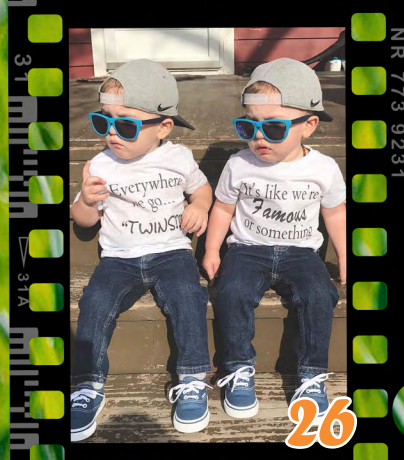
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