

# JUST TAKE 2 (Minutes)



**O**n an average day, an American spends 19.2 minutes traveling to work or school, 209.4 minutes at work or school, 33 minutes doing housework, 19.2 minutes exercising, 43.2 minutes shopping, 106.2 minutes preparing and eating food, 166.2 minutes watching TV, and 528 minutes (8.8 hours) sleeping, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Other studies estimate that every day, U.S. adults spend an average of 4 hours and 40 minutes (that's 280 minutes) on mobile devices. So, given that a day is made up of 1,440 minutes and that you find time to do all of these things, it's not unreasonable to ask that you make sure to take 2 minutes twice a day to tend to your oral health by brushing your teeth. These 4 minutes may be one of the best things you do for yourself all day.

According to the American Dental Association (ADA), the average time most people spend brushing their teeth is 45 seconds. However, for the best results, the ADA recommends brushing 2 minutes, twice a day, with fluoride toothpaste. This general guideline of 2 minutes ensures that you spend enough time brushing your teeth to remove any built-up food particles and plaque, as well as to apply fluoride to tooth surfaces to help prevent cavities.

While making sure you set aside the time to brush is important, it's equally important to be sure you're utilizing that time properly. Don't just go through the motions, counting down the seconds. Pay attention to your technique and the tools you use. The ADA recommends placing your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to the gums. You also want to be sure to use a soft-bristled brush, because a hard-bristled brush can damage tooth enamel, making your teeth more susceptible to decay and other oral issues. Lastly, don't brush your teeth too vigorously. Not only does brushing your teeth too fast *not* make the 2 minutes go by any faster, but also it can potentially damage your tooth's enamel and your gums, and can cause sensitivity.

Between work/school, appointments, errands, and social activities, we Americans sure can pack a lot into a day. Just be sure to take 2 of those minutes—twice a day—to keep your smile healthy and bright.

## HERE ARE SOME TRICKS YOU CAN USE TO MAKE SURE YOU REACH THE 2-MINUTE MARK DURING A BRUSHING SESSION:

- Set the timer on your cell phone to 2 minutes or flip an egg timer.
- Cue up a song on your phone or radio and brush from beginning to end (think more “We Will Rock You” and less “Stairway to Heaven,” as the Queen song clocks in at just over 2 minutes).
- Use a toothbrush with a built-in timer (many electric toothbrushes feature 2-minute timers).
- Brush from the start to the end of two 60-second or four 30-second commercial breaks while you're watching television or streaming a show on Hulu.