

Which Way Should I Multiply?

Every number has a smart way. Find the number, then try the way next to it.

NUMBER	TRY THIS WAY	LIKE THIS
× 0	Everything disappears. No groups at all.	$7 \times 0 = 0$
× 1	One group, so it stays the same.	$7 \times 1 = 7$
× 2	Just double it.	$7 \times 2 = 14$
× 3	Double it, then add one more group.	$7 \times 3: 7 \times 2 = 14, \text{ then } 14 + 7 = 21$
× 4	Double, then double again.	$7 \times 4: 7 \times 2 = 14, \text{ then } 14 \times 2 = 28$
× 5	Do ten times, then take half.	$8 \times 5: 10 \times 8 = 80, \text{ then half is } 40$
× 6	Do the three times fact, then double it.	$6 \times 7: 3 \times 7 = 21, \text{ then } 21 + 21 = 42$
× 7	Break it into a 5 and a 2.	$7 \times 8: 5 \times 8 = 40, 2 \times 8 = 16, \text{ so } 56$
× 8	Double three times over.	$8 \times 7: 14, \text{ then } 28, \text{ then } 56$
× 9	Do ten times, then take one group away.	$9 \times 6: 10 \times 6 = 60, \text{ then } 60 - 6 = 54$
× 10	Multiply without the zero, then put it back.	$10 \times 7 = 70$
× 11	Add the two digits, drop the sum in the middle.	$11 \times 34: 3 + 4 = 7, \text{ so } 374$
× 12	Ten times plus two times.	$12 \times 7: 10 \times 7 = 70, 2 \times 7 = 14, \text{ so } 84$
squares	Learn these as anchors - the neighbours come free.	$7 \times 7 = 49, \text{ so } 7 \times 8 = 49 + 7 = 56$

If both numbers have a trick, use the one for 10, 9, 11 or 5 first. If two ways both work, use the one that feels quicker in your head.

