

FLATTMANN FILES

June 2024

“Quality Is No Accident”

Life as a Juggling Act

How to Balance It All (and Know When You Can't)

I often bring up strange, unknown holidays and observances, but this one might be the most unusual yet. Did you know there is such a thing as World Juggling Day? Apparently, June 15 is when we all can celebrate the joys of juggling, and you may be surprised to know I was once a pretty skilled juggler! This day not only has me reminiscing those juggling memories but also the constant juggling of work and life — a familiar act for many of us.

I first learned to juggle back in sixth grade. It was one of those rainy days when we couldn't go outside for PE, so our teacher, ever so resourceful, decided it was the perfect time for a juggling lesson. We started with handkerchiefs tied into knots because they floated longer in the air, making it easier to catch them. I caught on pretty quickly, and soon after, my enthusiasm led me to get a proper juggling kit. Before I knew it, I was juggling five balls at a time!

Though it's been a while since I've practiced, and I definitely steer clear of juggling chainsaws or torches, I might juggle a knife now and then as my wife and kids yell at me in the background.

I even taught my wife how to juggle in high school. She got so good that she and her roommate performed a juggling act in a college talent show! These days, we don't juggle objects as much, but like many of you, we're still juggling everyday life — managing kids, work, and our social lives.

The truth is that no matter what stage of life you're in, you'll always be juggling something. From the pressures our kids face in school — balancing academics, sports, and their social lives — to the pressures we face in our careers and personal lives, the act of juggling never stops.

In my two decades as an attorney, I've learned that juggling multiple cases requires skill, especially when providing individualized attention to each case while staying organized. It may seem like a circus act sometimes, but there's always a method to the madness.



Scan the QR code to
visit our YouTube page

For those of you feeling overwhelmed by your juggling acts, here are a few tips:

1. **Embrace Imperfection:** No one can juggle everything perfectly. Drop a ball? It's okay as long as you keep the rest moving.
2. **Stay Organized:** Organization isn't just about keeping things tidy; it's about preparing yourself to handle unexpected throws.
3. **Prioritize Health:** Your health is crucial. Without it, you can't keep any balls in the air.
4. **Seek Balance:** In today's fast-paced world, where technology demands rapid responses, finding a spiritual or meditative outlet can help slow things down.

This World Juggling Day, whether you're tossing balls, pins, or just trying to keep your schedule in check, remember to take a moment to enjoy the process.

To all the fellow jugglers out there, keep those balls in the air, and maybe we can swap some tips on how to keep it all going without dropping too many along the way.
Happy Juggling!



-Grady Flattmann



RENTAL RIDDLE

LANDLORDS RESIST SECURITY DEPOSIT RETURNS

Renters often worry (for good reason) about getting their security deposits back. Landlords hold all the cards and can devise countless reasons why they are entitled to keep your cash after you move out.

“When I was a renter, I never once received a security deposit back,” Green Bee Memphis, a Memphis Realtor, declared in a 2023 video on TikTok.

U.S. renters are among the nation’s most economically vulnerable people. According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University, nearly half of all renters spend more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities, a level that housing experts consider burdensome. A record-high 22.4 million renters fell into this category in 2022, up about 2% from three years earlier. No wonder the 1 in 3 Americans who rent are concerned about getting their security deposits back.

Landlords tend to occupy the opposite end of the economic spectrum, and all states have enacted at least some legal protections for renters. State laws vary, but all require landlords to return security deposits to renters within 14–60 days after they move out, according to Nolo.com’s Legal Encyclopedia.

Kentucky, Washington, and Green Bee Memphis’s state of Tennessee, among others, require landlords to keep security deposits in a separate account maintained for that purpose. In Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, Illinois, and other states, those accounts must pay interest that must be returned to renters.

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When landlords withhold security deposit refunds, they are typically required to give renters a list of damages to justify their decision. And they should not charge renters for routine cleaning or ordinary wear and tear — only for careless or willful damage or excessive filth.

Defining ordinary wear and tear can be difficult. For example, suppose a landlord installs new carpeting before a tenant moves in, and the tenant stays four years. In that case, the carpet will inevitably show some wear after the tenant moves out, but this is typically regarded as ordinary wear and tear — not a repair that tenants should be required to cover. Other examples offered by Nolo.com include linoleum stains from shower spray, which is ordinary wear and tear, versus broken tiles in the bathroom, which is damage. Similarly, dents in the wall where a door handle bumped constitute normal wear and tear, while a door ripped off the hinges is damage. Tenants should notify landlords in writing within 3–5 days of moving in about any damage to the apartment so they won’t be billed for it later.

One of the most common causes of tenant-landlord lawsuits is a landlord’s refusal to return a security deposit. Tenants who want to contest a landlord’s decision should gather evidence, including move-in and move-out reports and photos, and state their position in a dispute letter. If out-of-court efforts to settle a dispute fail, tenants usually can file suit in small claims court.

TAKE A *BREAK*

SOLUTION

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IT'S FATHER'S DAY!

Children Create Unique Dad's Day Gifts

Recently, people have been spending big on Father's Day, and many wait until the very last minute. Last year, Americans spent a record \$22.9 billion on Father's Day, up nearly 10% from the previous year, according to an industry survey. And more than half of consumers don't start shopping until the week before Father's Day, while 3.5% wait until the very last day before the holiday, according to another survey.

The second survey also revealed that over 75% of shoppers struggle to think of good Father's Day ideas. Most settle on outings, clothing, gift cards, personal care items, or electronics. Here are three low-budget ideas you can do with your kids that are sure to charm any dad, offered by What's Up Moms, a top parenting site on YouTube co-founded by vlogger Elle Walker.

Interview Cards

If your kids are preschoolers, have them answer questions about their father and record their answers on notecards. Things like, "How old do you think Daddy is? 100? What is one thing Daddy says? What does Daddy do for work? Why do you love Daddy?" The simplicity and innocence of your children's answers will warm Dad's heart more than any store-bought gift ever could.

Shopping Spree

Give each child \$10 to pick out something for Dad, all by themselves, then take them to the nearest big-box store. Walker's youngsters came up with a mirror, a pair of swim trunks, and crib sheets, and they clearly loved being empowered to make choices.

Photos From a Kid's Perspective

You may be surprised at some of the angles children choose and the tender moments they capture, "even if they're not wow-worthy," Walker says. Her daughter caught a captivating shot of her husband, Ross, napping with their preschool son resting on his shoulder.



SUMMER CHICKEN SALAD

Ingredients

- 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- Salt and pepper
- 4 ears of corn, shucked
- 3 tbsp minced dill
- 3 stalks celery, finely diced
- 1 red onion, finely diced
- 1 1/2 cups blueberries
- 1 head of butter lettuce

Inspired by FoodNetwork.com

Dressing

- 3/4 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/2 cup half and half
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1 tsp sugar
- Juice of 1 lemon

Directions

1. Place chicken in a large plastic bag and pound with a mallet to flatten to 1/4-inch thickness. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
2. Heat grill, then grill chicken on both sides for about 4 minutes per side; set aside to cool before slicing.
3. Grill corn until the kernels begin browning, turning regularly for even cooking. Use a knife to shave the kernels off.
4. In a bowl, mix all dressing ingredients until combined.
5. In a large bowl, combine corn, dill, celery, and onions, then stir in chicken and top with dressing and blueberries as desired.
6. Separate the head of butter lettuce into "cups" to fill with salad and enjoy!



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WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?

WEIRD STATE LAWS SAFEGUARD SALAMANDERS AND SEAWEED

Ignorance about the law is usually not a defense if you're caught in a violation. Some oddball state laws, however, are so strange that they could only be described as booby traps for the unknowing. Here are two legislative oddities sure to surprise any hapless offender.

76 Salamanders

A popular YouTube commentator has called out the state of Illinois for barring anyone from owning more than 75 salamanders. Why? Several salamander species are classified as endangered in Illinois, and the state regulates the commercial trade of these amphibians. The law assumes any resident who possesses salamanders valued at \$600 or more intends to market them commercially — illegally. The law estimates the value of a salamander at \$5, suggesting it actually prohibits owning 120 salamanders. But who's counting?

Nighttime Seaweed

From the annals of lawmaking history, a 1973 New Hampshire law banned any effort to “carry away or

collect for the purpose of carrying away any seaweed ... between evening and daylight.”

The backstory: Farmers in New Hampshire once collected seaweed from the beaches to use as fertilizer, leading at least one town to ban nighttime harvesting to “give everyone an equal chance” at stocking up on seaweed. However, after a group of high school students singled out the law as the state's dumbest, lawmakers repealed it in 2016.

Not all states with stupid laws are culpable. Internet jokesters questioned South Dakota about a law supposedly barring people from falling asleep in a cheese factory. The actual law makes a lot more sense: It bans setting up your bedroom in a space used to prepare food for the public.

Noting the error, a Sioux Falls radio station, Hot 104.7, fired back at critics, creating their own new category of missteps: “Stupid questions people ask about South Dakota.” Fair enough!

