

Last-Minute Elf Ideas

Every one takes five minutes or less, even at 11 p.m.. 24 ideas, no-mess ones first: tick each one you use.

- ☐ **#1 Cereal Box Stakeout** 5 min no mess funny
The elf peeks out of the cereal box, binoculars made from two bottle caps held to its eyes. **You need:** cereal box, two bottle caps.

- ☐ **#2 Snowflake Pancakes** 5 min no mess breakfast
The elf left a note: "Pancakes shaped like snowflakes, please!" with a pancake spatula. **You need:** sticky note, spatula.

- ☐ **#3 Secret Helper Mission** 5 min no mess kind
The elf whispers in a note: "Do one chore for someone today without telling them." **You need:** sticky note.

- ☐ **#4 Word Search Challenge** 5 min no mess printable
The elf left a Christmas word search with one word already circled as a head start. **You need:** printed word search, pencil.

- ☐ **#5 Window Wave** 5 min no mess
The elf is waving from the front window to the neighbors with a "Merry Morning!" sign. **You need:** paper, marker, tape.

- ☐ **#6 Share a Treat** 5 min no mess kind
The elf leaves two small treats and a note: "One for you, one to share with someone." **You need:** two small treats, note.

- ☐ **#7 Snow Day Pajamas** 5 min no mess funny
The elf is wearing a sock sleeping bag and holds a sign: "Pajama day today?" **You need:** a clean sock, sign.

- ☐ **#8 Your Move** 5 min no mess
The elf started a game of tic-tac-toe on paper and left it half finished: "Your move." **You need:** paper, pencil.

- ☐ **#9 Breakfast Smiley** 5 min no mess breakfast
The elf arranged the fruit and cereal into a smiley face on a plate. **You need:** fruit, cereal, plate.

- ☐ **#10 Wrapping Tube Lookout** 5 min no mess funny
The elf peeks out of an empty wrapping paper tube like a telescope. **You need:** wrapping paper tube.

- ☐ **#11 Elf Yoga** 5 min no mess funny
The elf holds a yoga pose on a washcloth mat: "Morning stretch with me?" **You need:** washcloth.

- ☐ **#12 Call the Grandparents** 5 min no mess kind
The elf sits by the phone with a note: "Video call someone who loves you tonight." **You need:** sticky note.

Last-Minute Elf Ideas, continued

- ☐ **#13** **Cookie Jar Culprit** 5 min no mess funny
The elf is sitting inside the empty cookie jar with a crumb on its face. **You need:** cookie jar, a cookie crumb.
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- ☐ **#14** **Hide in the Tree Skirt** 5 min no mess
The elf is half-hidden under the tree skirt, only its hat poking out. **You need:** tree skirt.
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- ☐ **#15** **Morning Workout** 5 min no mess funny
The elf is lifting "weights": a straw with a marshmallow on each end. **You need:** straw, 2 marshmallows.
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- ☐ **#16** **Neighbor Cookie Plan** 5 min no mess kind
The elf holds a recipe card with a note: "This weekend we bake cookies for a neighbor." **You need:** recipe card.
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- ☐ **#17** **Toilet Paper Snowman** 5 min no mess funny
Three toilet paper rolls are stacked into a snowman with a scarf and a drawn-on face. **You need:** 3 toilet paper rolls, scarf, marker or paper.
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- ☐ **#18** **Shopping List Prank** 5 min no mess funny
The elf added to the shopping list: "marshmallows, more marshmallows, elf-size socks." **You need:** shopping list, pen.
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- ☐ **#19** **Make Someone's Bed** 5 min no mess kind
The elf's note says: "Make your brother's, sister's or grown-up's bed today as a surprise." **You need:** sticky note.
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- ☐ **#20** **Story for a Little One** 5 min no mess kind
The elf sits on a picture book with a note: read this to a younger friend or cousin. **You need:** picture book, sticky note.
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- ☐ **#21** **North Pole Report Card** 5 min no mess funny
The elf left a printed note grading the house: "Hugs A+, bedtimes B, cookie supply C." **You need:** printed note strip.
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- ☐ **#22** **Cooking Lessons** 5 min no mess funny
The elf is reading a cookbook upside down, with a note: "Learning to cook. Going well." **You need:** cookbook, sticky note.
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- ☐ **#23** **Ornament Elf** 5 min no mess
The elf hangs on the tree like an ornament, tied on with a ribbon loop. **You need:** ribbon.
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- ☐ **#24** **Elf Artist** 5 min no mess
The elf stands at a book-easel next to its "masterpiece": one of the kids' drawings. **You need:** a hardcover book, a kid's drawing.

Elf supplies checklist

Gather these into one "elf box" before the season starts, and the late nights run themselves

☐ cereal box	#1	☐ cookie jar	#13
☐ two bottle caps	#1	☐ a cookie crumb	#13
☐ sticky note	#2, 3, 12, 19, 20, 22	☐ tree skirt	#14
☐ spatula	#2	☐ straw	#15
☐ printed word search	#4	☐ 2 marshmallows	#15
☐ pencil	#4, 8	☐ recipe card	#16
☐ paper	#5, 8	☐ 3 toilet paper rolls	#17
☐ marker	#5	☐ scarf	#17
☐ tape	#5	☐ marker or paper	#17
☐ two small treats	#6	☐ shopping list	#18
☐ note	#6	☐ pen	#18
☐ a clean sock	#7	☐ picture book	#20
☐ sign	#7	☐ printed note strip	#21
☐ fruit	#9	☐ cookbook	#22
☐ cereal	#9	☐ ribbon	#23
☐ plate	#9	☐ a hardcover book	#24
☐ wrapping paper tube	#10	☐ a kid's drawing	#24
☐ washcloth	#11		

Elf tip: 0 of these 24 ideas need a little tidy-up; the rest leave no mess at all. Nothing here needs anything hot, sharp or high up. Pick the night before, not the week before: a surprise found at 7 a.m. beats a plan made on Sunday.