

How to Stop Procrastinating

- Procrastination is defined as the intentional and habitual postponement of an important task that should be done now.
- Recognize that procrastination stems from habit. New habits will be needed, and these take time and commitment to develop.
- Understand the cause for procrastination then develop strategies to fix it.
- Recognize the difference between an appropriate decision to delay, and in irrational postponement without justification.

TASK STRATEGIES

Unpleasant tasks rarely turn out to be as bad as you think.

- Complete these tasks first. Schedule them for early in the day. Give yourself a reward for doing them – like a special treat – there's nothing wrong with treating yourself for completing a task, but don't get the treat if you don't do it (that's cheating)!

COMPLEX PROJECTS

Something looms ahead of you: a paper, a quiz, a project or dreaded mid-terms and finals, so you put it off

- Plan and complete a start-up task no matter how small.
- Break large jobs into smaller more manageable tasks. Make a very small task for yourself and finish it then make another one. Keep completing the small tasks and before you know it your project will be complete!
- Avoid indecision – People delay because they can't make up their minds
- Determine a time for making a decision and the criteria for making it. Share your deadline with someone else who will hold you accountable.

FEAR OF FAILURE (LACK OF SELF-CONFIDENCE)

The fear of failure and the possible consequences from failure may cause some people to delay.

- Develop a clear mental picture of the completed task and how you will feel at that time.
- Maintain a focus on the end result, not just the process.
- Remind yourself of how good you'll feel when you are finished.

LACK OF INTEREST

Let's face it everything that we *need* to do isn't what we *want* to do.

- If you are faced with a task that you have to do but the interest is not there, do whatever you can to make it fun. If possible, find a friend to do the task with, play music that gets you going and take dance breaks, put your headphones in and "listen" to a movie you know well (listen...not watch).
- Make a game out of unpleasant tasks. Give yourself points or do a running commentary on yourself as you do the task. Make it fun—as awkward as it may sound IT WORKS!

DISTRACTIONS OR LACK OF FOCUS

Sometimes losing concentration causes delays.

- Create a "to-do" list with priorities
- Block time out of your day for projects.
- If you start to lose focus, maybe it's time for a break. Give yourself no more than 5 or 10 minutes to engage in another activity or just meditate for a moment then get back to work. Don't force yourself to continue unless you can concentrate otherwise you may make mistakes that could have been avoided thus making the task even more cumbersome.
- Avoid distractions by creating an environment that's conducive to getting your work done. Close your door and turn off cell phones or other devices that may interrupt your concentration.
- Find a place to work that will allow privacy, quiet, and motivation.
- Let friends and family know not to interrupt you for a certain period of time. Use a "Do Not Disturb" sign if necessary.

PERFECTIONISM

People delay because they want to get the project perfect

- Maintain your high standards, but recognize that your 100% effort is all it takes to make a project "perfect." As long as you are giving your all and not cutting corners you are giving all that anyone can ask of you.
- Feeling good about what you have accomplished transcends how others feel or react to it.