

How to Overcome Procrastination

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Procrastinating might make you feel good, at least in the short term. But don't fool yourself; avoiding tasks almost always causes long-term problems. Responsibilities will inevitably pile up, and you might find yourself without adequate time to complete them, which might result in your producing substandard work. Procrastination also takes an emotional toll: the stress of putting things off often results in feelings of powerlessness.

Consider the effects of procrastinating vs. not procrastinating

What rewards lie ahead if you accomplish your task? What will happen if you continue to put it off? Try to decide which scenario you prefer. Chances are you'll benefit more from facing the task head-on. Also remember: what happens to you is largely your choice, and you're ultimately in control of whatever situation you're dealing with.

Set reasonable goals

Plan your goals carefully, being sure to allow yourself enough time to complete them. Unreasonable goals can be terribly intimidating and cause you to do nothing at all. For example, "Write my history paper this weekend" is intimidating. But "Create a thesis for my history paper" might inspire you to take action.

Break the task into smaller parts

How can you approach your task step by step? If you're able to concentrate on achieving one small goal at a time, the task may seem like less of a burden. Moreover, setting concrete time goals for each task may give you a feeling of increased control. Do something every day on your project.

Take action

Going from doing nothing to doing something is often the hardest part of overcoming procrastination. Recognize and confront your forms of avoidance: socializing, reading, daydreaming, and sleeping are all common. Once you're able to start doing something - even if it's something very small - your actions will likely have a positive effect on your attitude, and you may find it easier to do more.

Be realistic

Remember: nobody's perfect. Most people learn by starting at the beginning and wading through plenty of mistakes and confusion. It's better to try your best than to do nothing at all. Persistence is more important than perfection, so expect - and most important - forgive yourself if you backslide.

Reward yourself

The reward that lies at the end of a lengthy or complicated goal may not always be enough to motivate you. Find ways to elevate your mood and boost your morale when you accomplish a goal along the way. Remind yourself that you're making progress by treating yourself to something you like - a movie, a latte, a walk outdoors.

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THE PROCRASTINATION QUOTIENT

	Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I usually find reasons for not acting immediately on a difficult assignment.				
I know what I have to do but frequently find that I have done something else instead.				
I carry my books and work assignments with me to various places but do not open them.				
I work best at the last minute, when the pressure is really on.				
There are too many interruptions that interfere with accomplishing my top priorities.				
I avoid forthright answers when pressed for an unpleasant decision.				
I take half measures which will avoid or delay unpleasant or difficult action.				
I have been too tired, nervous, or upset to do the difficult task that faces me.				
I like to get my room in a good order before starting a difficult study task.				
I find myself waiting for inspirations before becoming involved on most important study or work tasks.				

total responses

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