

Super Charge Your Education!

PROCRASTINATION

Procrastination is NOT productive

“I work better under pressure” is an excuse many of us tell ourselves. What we are really saying is, “I can’t muster the motivation to get started unless I’m in emergency mode.” It is okay to prioritize and put some tasks on the backburner while you work on more pressing assignments. But if you are avoiding a task because you don’t want to do it or don’t know how to do it, your procrastination is unhealthy. Below are some ways to overcome unhealthy procrastination.



Reminder: if you do it now, you won't have to do it later. I struggle with making myself actually complete assignments, but a great reminder is that I only have to worry about assignments being unfinished for as long as I choose to. You have the ability to get it done!
 —Senior education major & ARC tutor

STEP 1: PUT IT IN PERSPECTIVE

Put the task in perspective. We avoid tasks out of fear or dislike. Recognize why you might be avoiding the task, then tell yourself, “Sure, this is not my favorite task, but I can get through it.” Sometimes just recognizing the problem is a big step to overcoming it. Then remind yourself of the long-term goals you are working toward. Which is more important, avoiding the stress of doing a task you don’t like, or making a good grade and eventually graduating with a college degree?

STEP 2: GET RID OF EXCUSES

~~I need to be in the mood.
 I'll wait until I have more time.
 I need X to happen before I can start.
 I work better under pressure.
 It doesn't matter that much.
 I keep forgetting to do it.
 I have too much to do already.
 I'm too tired.
 I don't have the skills to do it.
 There is still plenty of time to do it.
 I've already waited until too late
 so I won't even start.~~

Recognize that excuses are things we all tell ourselves as a way to justify not working on tasks we are trying to avoid. If it is important, then we *make the time, make do with the resources we already have, and get to work.*

“It's only tough if you make excuses about it.”

If you are scared of making a mistake or doing it wrong, remember that — LeBron James
 “Perfect is the enemy of good” (Voltaire). It will never get done if you expect to do it perfectly on the first try. Do your best, but be willing to get it wrong and embrace the learning experience.

STEP 3: JUMP IN

“For me, procrastination is one of my biggest productivity struggles, but it really only rears its ugly head at one step in the process, and that’s at the beginning of a task. ...And once I can get over it, I can get into that flow state and work really, really intensely for a long period of time” (Thomas Frank, *College Info Geek*.)

To get over procrastination, chunk a big task into smaller ones. Find a small task to get you started, and **jump in**. Don’t think, “Today I have to write a 10-page paper.” Instead, think, “Today I will write the first page of my paper.” Start immediately. Block out the time just like you would for going to class. Use the Pomodoro technique to get started on the first chunk!



To overcome procrastination, it helps me to set a personal deadline or a timer for myself for an hour or so. For me, this makes the assignments feel more immediate instead of something that can be pushed back to a later date.
 —Sophomore math ed. major and ARC tutor

The Pomodoro Technique
 Pomodoro is the Italian word for tomato. The inventor named the technique after a tomato-shaped timer he used to track his work.

1. Identify task
2. Set timer for 25 minutes
3. Work on task (with no distractions)
4. End work when timer rings and mark task as done
5. Take a 5 minute break, then move on to next task
6. After four sprints, take a longer break (15-30 minutes), then start again

Pomodoro 1 Pomodoro 2 Pomodoro 3 Pomodoro 4 Break :)

References

Frank, T. (2017). My #1 method for stopping procrastination. *College Info Geek*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0k0TQfZGSc>
 Lombardo, E. (2017). 11 ways to overcome procrastination. *Psychology Today*. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/better-perfect/201703/11-ways-overcome-procrastination>