

M-O-R-E PROCRASTINATION ELIMINATION STRATEGIES

Time-Telling: Through practice, try and get better at estimating how long it takes you to complete certain tasks. Procrastinators tend to *underestimate* how much time they need to complete tasks.

Prompts/Reminder Notes: Use notes to remind you of what you need to do. Post the notes where you'll be sure to see them: the refrigerator, your computer, the mirror, etc.

Reinforcement: Use rewards as an incentive. For example, "If I read my history textbook for an hour, I'll play my favorite video game for 10 minutes."

The Bits-and-Pieces Approach: By breaking a task into small and manageable parts, it'll be easier to complete. For example, if you have to read a 200 page novel in a week, set a goal of reading 30 pages a day.

The Five-Minute Plan: Agree to work on a task for five minutes, and then make another five-minute agreement, and then another, and another, and so on. Oftentimes you'll build up so much momentum that you won't want to stop.

The 80% Success Rule: Reward yourself for getting *most* of the task done, and then try and finish. For example, once you've read 160/200 pages of your novel, treat yourself to a movie, and then commit to reading the last 40 pages.

Social Support for Task Completion: One of the best strategies for success is to work with people who are successful. So if you are a procrastinator, it can help you to work with people who get things done.

Establish a Set Time for a Routine: We are creatures of habit. It can help to have a set time to study each day. If at first you don't get into it, just sit there and don't do anything. Soon enough you'll get to business.

Modify the Environment: Make sure that you are studying in an appropriate setting. For example, if you tend to study in your dorm while your roommate watches TV, you may be better off studying in the library.

PROCRASTINATION ATTACK STRATEGIES

The reasons we procrastinate are easy to identify. We might feel overwhelmed by the task, or we may be perfectionists, or maybe we get distracted easily, or perhaps we are just plain lazy. Whatever the reason, the fact remains:

**PROCRASTINATION CREATES MORE STRESS IN OUR LIVES,
AND NEVER YIELDS OUR BEST RESULTS.**

PROCRASTINATORS TELL THEMSELVES FIVE LIES:

- 1 - I have to "be in the mood" to be creative or do my best work.
- 2 - I will be more motivated to complete the task tomorrow, next week, next month and so on.
- 3 - I underestimate the amount of time it takes to finish a job.
- 4 - I believe work should be done perfectly or not at all. Hence, the novel that never gets finished.
- 5 - I think accomplishing a task requires that I feel like doing it.

Since the demands placed on college students are high, it is important to enter college knowing, **procrastination can severely hinder your academic performance**. This is true in school as well as in life. With this in mind, it is essential to have a **realistic game plan** for overcoming procrastination. Here are some helpful tips:

Assess the Task

Spend a few minutes thinking through everything that needs to be done, then, if possible, segment the task into various smaller pieces. It's much easier to tackle smaller chunks than one huge task.

"Once begun, it's half done"

Yes, a cliché inspirational poster quote, but quite true. Don't shoot for completion in one sitting. This will overwhelm you every time. Just begin. Getting started is the key, and incremental progress will follow.

Schedule "Action Sessions"

Progress, even a little bit each day, adds up, and over time increases your confidence that you can, that you will, finish. Schedule 15- to 30-minute "action sessions" with realistic goals in mind, and set your mind to completing these goals.

Eliminate Distractions

Find a quiet place, and try to make your "action sessions" count, all 15-30 minutes of them (or whatever amount of time you designate).

Reward Yourself

This can help seemingly painful projects become more pleasurable. After completing an "action session," take a nap, buy a latte, call a friend, round up a game of ultimate Frisbee. The point is to have something to look forward to, so that you begin to associate hard work at school with pleasure.

Find a (Good) Study Partner

And not just anyone, either. Find someone that cares about their performance even more than you do. The old adage, "If you want to be a good student, hang out with good students," is not only true, but imperative.

Be Reasonable

Don't beat yourself up about getting everything perfect. Remember, you will take on—and likely complete—hundreds, possibly thousands, of projects throughout your college career. The goal of making every one of them perfect is not only impossible, but silly. Remember, it's more important that every project gets finished, not that every project be perfect.