

Overcoming Procrastination

Plan, then act. Take bite-sized pieces.

Start with a written plan of action. Keep your plan simple. Determine how much work you can tolerate at a time. Don't push yourself too far or you'll get bored or frustrated.

Break down large tasks into bite-sized pieces. Spread your tasks out over several work sessions. You don't have to complete all the steps of a project in one sitting. Start with the one thing you must get done today to feel productive. It should be a manageable item you can complete in 10-15 minutes.

Own the clock.

Know the deadline and give yourself a little room to spare. If the deadline is 3:00 p.m. on Friday, set a new deadline of 10:00 a.m. This will put you in control of your time and provide a little cushion to manage surprises. View deadlines as an opportunity to impress and even amaze!



Break it down, then break it down... again.

Breaking the task into manageable steps or goals will make even the largest of goals achievable. Assign each step a realistic time frame in which to complete it. Writing the steps on a list or calendar will give you a visual reminder of what needs to be done. Crossing off items on your to-do list or calendar can provide a real sense of satisfaction and progress.

Work in concentrated “bursts” of time. Set a timer for 20 minutes and power through until the time is up. Take a quick, 2 to 3 minute break and set the timer again for another 20-minute round.

Minimize distractions and plan around interruptions.

Remove the distractions of your cell phone, excess tabs in your web browser, your television, or relocate yourself to an area where these distractions are reduced.

Interruptions tend to occur in identifiable patterns. Notice when interruptions occur, by whom, and why. Take steps to prevent interruptions before they occur. If you can't avoid them, try to plan around them.

Good enough is good enough—just do it!

Don't try to do everything perfectly! Perfectionism often causes procrastination. Perfectionists would rather put it off than do an incomplete job. Rather than perfection, aim for progress. Any small step toward completion is an accomplishment.

Do the worst piece first and get it out of the way. Once you tackle the part you are dreading, doing the rest will be a breeze. Alternate unpleasant jobs with tasks you enjoy.

Stay motivated by rewarding your progress.

Reward your progress! Rewards encourage productivity. Reward every step along the way, not just the final result. The bigger the accomplishment, the bigger the reward.

There is always something to learn from setbacks. You are *not* lazy. Remember that you are in control. Change your approach—do it differently next time and continue your momentum to completion.

