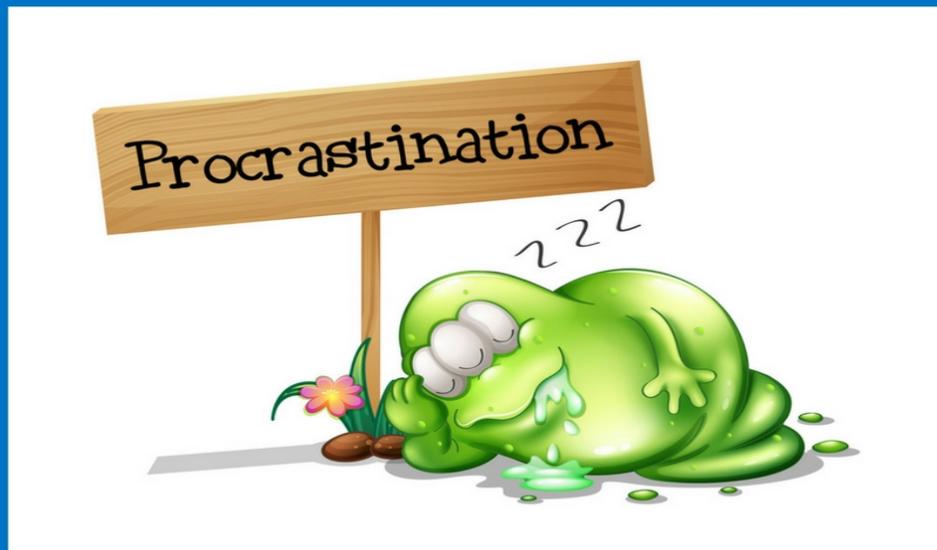


10 WAYS TO PUT-OFF PROCRASTINATION

Learn strategies to get more done so you have more time for the FUN stuff!

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While there are common causes and reasons for procrastination, there are even more “cures”. I am going to share with you 10 Ways that you can Put-off procrastination and get things done.

1. Use Parkinson’s Law

Cyril Northcote Parkinson was a British author who once worked for the civil service. He famously came up with the maxim: **“Work expands to fill the time available for its completion”**—meaning that if we allow a week for a task that should take one day, being human, we will automatically make that task more complex (or waste more time), so that it really does take a full week to complete it.

So keeping that law in mind, Lifehack.org suggest you do the reverse. List your daily or weekly tasks; then cut the time estimated in half. Chances are, you will find yourself unable to procrastinate because you will be more focused on completing each task. The result? You’ll end up with free time at the end of the work week—when you can properly enjoy it, guilt-free!

As you get better as estimating your time, you can change which items you choose to cut the estimated time.

2. Tame the Time Stealers

Keep an eye out for **“time stealers”**—small tasks that nibble away minutes and eventually hours from our days. These usually turn out to be tasks such as checking email, checking Facebook, answering the telephone while you’re working, answering the door, getting up to make a cup of coffee and the list goes on.

It doesn’t matter what you stop working to do: You need to Record it!

Keep a log for a few days, and see where you are spending too much time on one particular distraction (for example, you may discover you actually get up to make six or seven cups of tea or coffee during the day, when you were sure it was only three or four).

Repetitive behaviors can become procrastination habits. Tame them by setting a limit to how many times per day you can indulge in that particular activity; or set a time limit—for example, “ten minutes only for checking email every two hours”. Use a simple timer with an audible alarm to help you to stick to your new time limits.

3. Put your Mobile Away!

If you're someone who is constantly checking your messages and if you have done the tracking the right way as above, you may be shocked at the amount of time that is wasted by taking those quick peeks. ***Put your mobile in another room so you won't even be tempted*** (there is an actual need that occurs when you are near your phone and not looking at it.)

Unless you're waiting for news of earth-shattering importance, the world won't end without you checking your messages. This can be one of those activities that you schedule (as above in #2). You will be establishing boundaries for yourself while also training people who don't respect your work hours what those boundaries are.

4. Go outdoors!

Next time you feel overwhelmed enough to take a break, don't fall into one of your habitual procrastination behaviors of checking email, doing Social media or any of the other rabbit holes. ***Instead take a brisk, twenty-minute walk or go sit for 15 minutes on the patio/deck.***

Fresh air helps both psychologically and by boosting oxygen production to clear the cobwebs from our brains. Tell yourself you're taking a break—not procrastinating (which you would have been doing, had you got sucked into your traditional game of Candy Crush).

Besides, a brisk twenty-minute walk per day will give you your daily exercise! (You can listen to a podcast or audible while walking so you are really leveraging your time.)

5. Ask Yourself What's Really Going On

You can't change a habit until you understand it. Next time you find yourself procrastinating, stop the procrastination activity you're doing, get up from your seat and ask yourself: "What is really going on here?"

Try to figure out if you're simply daunted by the thought of starting a task you find difficult, or you simply hate that particular task, or you're frustrated because you aren't quite confident about what you are doing—or whatever is really behind the procrastination.

Getting in touch with your real feelings can tip you off to finding the right solution to that particular procrastination activity. For example, if you absolutely hate setting up an email series or your newsletter, plan to outsource this activity in the future.

6. Break it Down

If a task seems overwhelming, break it down into its smallest steps. Then focus on only performing “the next step”. You’ll find you are more easily able to start even the most overwhelming task if you can identify and take that all-important first step. Just the process of taking a step forward will give you a feeling of success and then you can take the next step with greater ease.

7. Make a “To-Don’t” List

Instead of writing the “To Do” list that you somehow never seem to tackle, do the opposite: ***Write a list of only the tasks you know you are going to procrastinate over.***

Chances are, there will only be one or two (or maybe three). Tackle these first before doing anything else—you’ll be surprised at how accomplished getting them done makes you feel. It will inspire you for the rest of the day.

8. Adjust your Expectations

Take a really close look at your personality. Do you constantly “make” things harder than they have to be? Do you expect the worst? Do you tell yourself “I can’t do this” forty times before you actually get started? Do you then have trouble because you’re rushing because you started late?

If so, do some cognitive restructuring and start giving yourself positive messages about the task. ***Realize that a task doesn’t always have to be the ultimate in perfection—it just has to get done.***

Try telling yourself: “It’s no big deal. The first step is...and focus only on that first step to get started.

Keep up positive reframing self-messages all through the project.

You can also put up prompts that remind you. Make an infographic of your favorite inspiring phrases—or buy one. Frame it. Keep it on your desk. Or at least print out motivational “reminder” phrases and stick them where you can see them—on your bulletin board; on the wall over your computer; or anywhere that makes them catch your eye.

For example, if you simply need to be reminded to get started, have a large reminder in site that says “Start right now!” ***Remember to move your permanent prompts around. Don’t keep them in the same place, or they’ll blend into the scenery in your mind’s eye.***

9. Be Specific

If you find yourself thinking in generalities about starting tasks, get specific. For example, instead of thinking “I’ve really got to write that blog post on Engaging your Audience,” change that thought to: “I’m going to write 10 Tips for Engaging Your Audience. Tip Number One is...”

Open up your word processor while you’re doing this—and be ready to start! Using outlines or mind maps may also help you get all the information down without the pressure of a blank page. You may have heard this before, “if you can write a grocery list, you can write an article.” You just need to get started. ***Begin writing down the different pieces of a task that you need to complete and then organize into the right order later.***

10. Be Consistent and Do It Everyday

If you constantly “forget” to do tasks or actions you’re “trying” to do, it may be because you haven’t yet created a habit. Popular psychology says it takes twenty-one days to create a habit. A NASA study found it took their test participants a little longer—at least thirty days—and they also discovered that if you break your new “habit” for even one day before the thirty-day period is up, you’ll be right back at square one. (I personally believe you need 34 days, 2 days to get mentally ready and then 32 to put the habit in place.)

If you fall off and miss a day, begin again the very next day. Maybe you need try something new or revisit 1-9 again.

Focus on your success. Visualize yourself getting things done with time left over and how good that will feel.

The urge to procrastinate can never totally be eliminated—it does serve a purpose. It’s usually a sign something isn’t quite right. ***But knowing what that purpose or reason is when you procrastinate and you can take control back and use your strategies to totally bust it, every time.***

Go to www.thrivingentrepreneur.com for more strategies to help you succeed.