

## PROCRASTINATION

Procrastination is the gap between our intention to do something and taking action to do it.

We all procrastinate in some way, but it is the level of distress that it causes that we may seek to reduce.

*'Shifting the way you work is stressful. In times of duress, your productivity may take a hit; just be ok with that'* Fred Stutzman, March 2020.

Notice how you procrastinate – changing to new working environments and new learning modes, especially online means there are many *new* ways to procrastinate.

- Everyone is available for online hangs at all hours and every day
- Constant news feeds, tik toks and explore pages
- Ongoing tweaking/reorganizing IT hardware and software
- 24/7 access to room cleaning, the fridge, Netflix etc

You may also experience changes to your intrinsic motivation, such as:

- Re-evaluation of your short to medium term goals
- Feeling generally discombobulated
- Changes in your sense of wellbeing

### Practical Strategy/Tips for dealing with procrastination

A. *Challenge thinking that 'gives you permission' to delay working on your tasks:*

Ways of thinking that lead to procrastination	Challenge that thinking
This task is hard, so I will put it off until I know how to do it/feel better about trying it. I need to do more research. I'm not in the right frame of mind to work now. I work better closer to deadlines. Last time I did it last moment it worked out ok. There are more fun things to be doing right now. I'll do it later. I'll work better after I've slept/eaten/cleaned my room. I'll have time to do it later.	Recognise procrastinating behaviour and question why. Acknowledge if previous delays in work have resulted in distress to you and others. No need to fixate on the entire magnitude of the task. Break up difficult tasks into sections. Approach one section at a time until completion. Identify an aspect of a difficult task you enjoy – start there. You don't have to achieve perfection in your first draft/attempt. Make a tangible plan of tasks versus time. Include fun activities to keep healthy and enjoy life. What is the reality of time available to you? Are you being realistic? Check-in with a friend for their perspective and encouragement.

B. *Procrastination is a behaviour that can be changed. Try these suggested changes in your habit.*

Try these...	Because...
Notice your behaviour: name it.	The more aware you are, the more likely you are to stop it.
Identify short term and medium term goals with realistic time limits.	Be motivated by your targets. Use short term goals to define your work plan.
Write a daily to weekly plan by the hour.	Be specific for every hour (tasks and fun). A tangible plan shows you the reality of time versus work and non-work activities.

Aim for output not perfection in the first attempt.	Having some output deflates the fear of the task. It is easier to edit something than edit a blank page.
Monitor your progress.	Self-assessment will allow you to adjust your plan if necessary.
Connect with others – talk with friends, peers and academic support ( <a href="#">Peer Advice Desk and Learning Advisors</a> are available for online chats and appointments; your tutors and lecturers) .	Avoid feeling isolated with your task. Talking things through often lubricates enthusiasm and gives clarity. Use Collaborate and the Discussion Board in your subject site; online apps like Zoom, Skype, Facetime etc.
Consider your wellbeing. If you are concerned, seek support – friends, peers, <a href="#">counselling</a> .	Seek to maintain your wellbeing (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social health) to allow you to work effectively.
Enjoy a reward.	Achieving a task deserves a reward. In that order.

*"It's up to you. It's a mindset"* AJC, self-confessed procrastinator, April 2020.

Want to know more?

Getting started and time management: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/students/learning-centre/getting-started>

How to manage your time: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/students/learning-centre/learning-online/how-to-manage-your-time>

Be proactive: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/students/learning-centre/learning-online/be-proactive>

#### Sources

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van Eerde, W., & Klingsieck, K. B. (2018). Overcoming procrastination? A meta-analysis of intervention studies. *Educational Research Review*, 25, 73-85.

Avoiding Procrastination, Study Smarter Survival Guide, University of Western Australia  
<https://www.uwa.edu.au/students/study-success/studysmarter#RESOURCES>