

Procrastination

What is Procrastination?

Procrastination is putting off or avoiding doing something that must be done. It is natural to procrastinate occasionally. However, excessive procrastination can result in guilt feelings about not doing a task when it should be done. It can also cause anxiety since the task still needs to be done. Further, excessive procrastination can cause poor performance if the task is completed without sufficient time to do it well. In short, excessive procrastination can interfere with school and personal success.

Why Do Students Procrastinate?

There are many reasons why students procrastinate. Here are the most common reasons:

1. *Perfectionism.* A student's standard of performance may be so high for a task that it does not seem possible to meet that standard.
2. *Fear of Failure.* A student may lack confidence and fear that he/she will be unable to accomplish a task successfully.
3. *Confusion.* A student may be unsure about how to start a task or how it should be completed.
4. *Task Difficulty.* A student may lack the skills and abilities needed to accomplish a task.
5. *Poor Motivation.* A student may have little or no interest in completing a task because he/she finds the task boring or lacking in relevance.
6. *Difficulty Concentrating.* A student may have too many things around that distract him/her from doing a task.
7. *Task Unpleasantness.* A student may dislike doing what a task requires.
8. *Lack of Priorities.* A student may have little or no sense about which tasks are most important to do.

How Do I Know if I Procrastinate Excessively?

You procrastinate excessively if you agree with five or more of the following statements:

1. I often put off starting a task I find difficult
2. I often give up on a task as soon as I start to find it difficult.
3. I often wonder why I should be doing a task.
4. I often have difficulty getting started on a task.
5. I often try to do so many tasks at once that I cannot do any of them.
6. I often put off a task in which I have little or no interest.
7. I often try to come up with reasons to do something other than a task I have to do.
8. I often ignore a task when I am not certain about how to start it or complete it.
9. I often start a task but stop before completing it.
10. I often find myself thinking that if I ignore a task, it will go away.
11. I often cannot decide which of a number of tasks I should complete first.

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12. I often find my mind wandering to things other than the task on which I am trying to work.

What Can I Do About Excessive Procrastination?

Here are some things you can do to control excessive procrastination.

1. Motivate yourself to work on a task with thoughts such as “There is no time like the present,” or “Nobody’s perfect.”
2. Prioritize the tasks you have to do.
3. Commit yourself to completing a task once started.
4. Reward yourself whenever you complete a task.
5. Work on tasks at the times you work best.
6. Break large tasks into small manageable parts.
7. Work on tasks as part of a study group.
8. Get help from teachers and other students when you find a task difficult.
9. Make a schedule of the tasks you have to do and stick to it.
10. Eliminate distractions that interfere with working on tasks.
11. Set reasonable standards that you can meet for a task.
12. Take breaks when working on a task so that you do not wear down.
13. Work on difficult and/or unpleasant tasks first.
14. Work on a task you find easier after you complete a difficult task.
15. Find a good place to work on tasks.

Above all, think positively and get going. Once you are into a task, you will probably find that it is more interesting than you thought it would be and not as difficult as you feared. You will feel increasingly relieved as you work toward its accomplishment and will come to look forward to the feeling of satisfaction you will experience when you have completed the task.



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