

TECHNIQUES TO MANAGE PROCRASTINATION

1. SET PRIORITIES

Not: I don't know where to begin so I can't begin at all.
I have to do EVERYTHING!! Nothing less will do.

Instead: The most important step is to pick one project and just focus on that one.

2. BREAK THE TASK DOWN INTO LITTLE PIECES

Not: There's so much to do and it's so complicated. I'm overwhelmed by all the problems that have been assigned

Instead: I don't have to do all the problems at once. I will do the easy ones first and work up to the harder problems.

3. SET UP SMALL, SPECIFIC GOALS

Not: I have to write the lab report in two weeks.

Instead: If I write two pages a day, Monday through Friday, I can finish half the report in a week. I'll have the final report done at the end of two weeks.

4. TAKE ONE SMALL STEP AT A TIME

Not: It's too much. I'll never get it all done.

Instead: What is the next exam (report required on my list of dates (due dates)? I'll concentrate on that exam (report), for right now.

5. REWARD YOURSELF RIGHT AWAY WHEN YOU ACCOMPLISH A SMALL GOAL

Not: I can't take any time out until I've completely finished this report

Instead: I spent an hour working on the Chapter 15 problems (experimental section of the report, etc.). Now I'll call a friend.

6. USE A TIME SCHEDULE

Not: I must devote the whole week to this project.

Instead: I can use these times this week work on my project: Monday 7-8, Tuesday 7-9, Saturday 10-12.

7. LEARN HOW TO TELL TIME

Not: Sorting through my lab notebook and reorganizing my lecture notes will be a snap. It won't take more than an hour, so I can do it anytime.

Instead: Sorting lecture notes and getting information from my lab notebook always takes longer than I expect, so I'll get started tonight. I'll spend an hour sorting my lecture notes.

8. OPTIMIZE YOUR CHANCES FOR SUCCESS

Not: I'll do my studying this weekend at home.

Instead: I'll study during the week in a library or in my office. (Choose whatever conditions are optimal for you to get studying done.)

9. DELEGATE, IF POSSIBLE

Not: I'm the only one in the world who can do this report.

Instead: I ask the instructor for help on this report. If she/he allows, I'll set up a study group to write the report.

10. JUST GET STARTED

Not: I can't write this literature talk until inspiration hits.

Instead: I'll write down whatever ideas first come into my mind and then I can improve on the talk later.

11. LOOK AT WHAT YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED

Not: I have hardly made a dent in all there is to do.

Instead: I finished one lab report and am half-way through the extra credit assignment. This won't win me the outstanding junior award yet, but it's more than did yesterday.

12. BE REALISTIC

Not: I should be able to work full-time, take an evening class, be president of the Chem Club, keep up with current events, spend more time with my family, and exercise an hour a day with no trouble at all.

Instead: I have limits. I can take on fewer responsibilities and still like myself.

Adapted from a handout provided by the Counseling Center:

"1982, Procrastination Seminars" Jane B. Burka, Ph.D.; Lenora M. Yuen, Ph.D.; and Susan Chandler, M.S.