

PROCRASTINATION



QUICK EXPLANATION

Often a symptom of those who are struggling with anxiety or other mental health difficulties is procrastination. It is a common difficulty and it may be something you regularly struggle with. Procrastination is the avoidance of completing tasks or postponing something. Procrastination can be a symptom of a different underlying issue, but hopefully using these tips will mean one less symptom to worry about.

This activity gives tips and examples that you can use to effectively lessen your procrastination especially if it is having an impact on your day-to-day tasks or academic studies.



AIM

To help you find ways to reduce your procrastination



INSTRUCTIONS

Think through the list of options and pick the options that would work best for you.

- **Focus on the 'why':** When we procrastinate, we can be searching for short term relief, rather than thinking of the longer-term results. If you are putting off an assignment, try to imagine what it will feel like once the assignment has been handed in.
- **Get out your calendar:** When a piece of work has a deadline, we often think I will complete it 'when I have the time' or at a later date. It is important to schedule in time to do it, even if just small goals. It is important to schedule when you are going to do the work and block out that time, just like you would a lecture. Even setting timers can help.
- **Be realistic:** When looking at the work that needs to be completed, don't set yourself up to fail. Set tasks that are small, achievable and realistic.
- **Chunk it:** When you have a looming large piece of work, it is often useful to break it up into small achievable pieces. For example, if you have a dissertation to write, rather than thinking of the whole project, break it up into smaller chunks. E.g. focus purely on background reading first and read a journal or two a day. Then move on to the next task.
- **A Problem Shared:** Connection and working with others can help us feel that we have a sense of responsibility to the other person. Working in pairs or groups, even if it is just working in the same environment can help us feel more motivated.
- **Environment:** Our environment can have a big impact on how productive we are. Are you comfortable? Are there lots of distractions? Is there daylight or natural light nearby? Phones and technology can be an easy distraction, so turning off phones or using apps that lock your phone for certain periods of time may be useful.
- **Forgive yourself:** Don't be hard on yourself or thinking that you aren't good enough. It has been found that being kinder and forgiving ourselves helps to overcome procrastination.

- **Drop the perfectionism:** If people experience 'perfectionist' thoughts such as 'it has to be perfect' or 'I need to get at least 70%', it can prevent them from starting something if they are struggling with it. It is important to challenge these thoughts and thinking that getting things done is more important than trying to make it perfect. You can still strive for excellence but do it in an achievable way. Remember: you are greater than your grades.
- **Rewards:** Perhaps it may be a good idea to reward yourself if you have been working well. Reward yourself with a short break, or a walk outside. Establish a reward if – and only if – you do what you set out to do. You could even schedule in rewards, such as an hour working means a 10-20-minute break.

Source: [Psychology Today](#).

Remember that change can take time, practice and patience so advise the student to persevere.



RESOURCES

Print the list to remind you of the signs and tips.