

How to Stop Procrastinating

Procrastination is no small matter. Almost everyone puts things off occasionally. Surprisingly, 20% of people identify themselves as “chronic procrastinators.” The good news is procrastination is a learned behavior. Here’s how to unravel your procrastination habit:

- **Ask “What’s getting in my way?”** – Identify the offending obstacle and look it in the eye. Most of what we dread is fabricated in our minds. Ask yourself what’s stopping you and take control of the situation. If lack of information stops you, seek resources through the Internet, books or people who know. If fear is stopping you, identify the fear and overcome it.
- **Make a decision** – It has been said that if you decide not to decide you’ve still made a decision. Very few things are so critical they cannot be undone. Make a decision and act on it – it’s the first step to moving forward.
- **Verbalize your commitment** – The American Society of Training and Development has found when you make a plan and tell someone of your commitment you’re 50-65% more likely to complete the task. If you set a date to report the results back to that person the success rate jumps to 95%. So, tell a trusted friend who will hold you accountable, it works.
- **Schedule tasks** – When a project seems daunting remember it’s just a series of smaller, different steps. You don’t have to complete it all at once. If you schedule and work on tasks a bit at a time, the whole thing will be completed with minimal pain. Don’t forget to acknowledge and celebrate your progress along the way.
- **Set realistic goals** – Of course you’ll be disheartened if you set lofty goals and miss them. What’s the point in that? Set attainable goals for each step of the process. You’ll be more motivated to work on the project each successive day.
- **Say “no”** – If someone requests something that will interfere with the completion of your task don’t use it as an excuse to procrastinate. Saying “no” is always an option. When “no” is not the best option, “yes, but later” often works. Respect your own time, others will respect you for it.
- **Dump perfection** - One leading cause of procrastination is the quest for perfection. A well done job causes no dishonor. Perfection often goes unnoticed. Delivering a well done job on time makes everyone happy.

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