

# Procrastination

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## What is Procrastination?

Procrastination describes delaying or putting off important tasks until the last minute, sometimes past the deadline, in favor of doing other less important things. We all procrastinate to some degree, but chronic procrastination can negatively impact our productivity and wellbeing, even causing ourselves additional, unnecessary stress.



## Why do we procrastinate?

Most people do not want to procrastinate, but we do it anyway. Sometimes, we are consciously avoiding an undesirable task. Other times, we unconsciously avoid tasks that may be challenging in order to avoid uncertainty or discomfort. Understanding **why** you are procrastinating may help you work through it. Ask yourself if any of the following statements apply to you, and then see if you can challenge your own thinking:

- I underestimate how long tasks will take to complete.
  - *Challenge yourself:* Try giving yourself extra time to complete something. If you complete it early, use your free time for something enjoyable.
- I need to get into the right frame of mind before starting a task.
  - *Challenge yourself:* Is there anything you can do to get yourself into that frame of mind? Try setting up your workspace and the materials you need. You may find that you get into the right frame of mind once you actually begin the task.
- I work better under pressure.
  - *Challenge yourself:* It's probably true that you work faster under pressure, but faster isn't always better. Try giving yourself an earlier deadline and sticking to it. You may be able to motivate yourself without experiencing the last-minute stress.
- I need time to think/relax/do something else before I start this task.
  - *Challenge yourself:* If you truly need to devote time to cleaning, relaxing, or looking at your phone, set a timer for yourself and stick to it.
- I am putting this off because I'm afraid it won't turn out right.
  - *Challenge yourself:* Is your procrastination the result of perfectionism? As an artist, a student, and a human being, you are always learning. The task may be challenging, and it may not turn out the way you hope, but putting it off doesn't change this. It only increases your anxiety. To learn more about the link between procrastination and perfectionism, click [here](#).



# Practical Tips for Reducing Procrastination

- ❑ Break up tasks into smaller, more manageable chunks.
- ❑ Reduce distractions. Turn off your phone and wifi, if possible.
- ❑ Create an artificial deadline that is sooner than the actual deadline.
- ❑ Imagine the future. What will it be like to complete this task?
- ❑ Treat yourself for meeting your deadline. When you complete a task ahead of schedule, allow yourself time for something rewarding or enjoyable.
- ❑ Be kind to yourself. Remind yourself that procrastination is normal, and you are able to tolerate uncertainty and complete challenging tasks.
- ❑ If you think you need additional resources or support, seek it out early. Click [here](#) to learn more about CCA's Learning Resources.

**For useful tips on time management, check out this article from CCA's Learning Resources:**

[Our 5 Favorite Sources of Time Management Advice](#)

## What About Self-Care?

Avoiding procrastination doesn't mean you have to give up on self-care or enjoyable activities. When you complete something you set out to do, you feel better about yourself, and you have more time to engage in self-care activities. When you take good care of your physical and emotional health, you are less likely to procrastinate.

Try not to mix up self-care and "stalling" tactics that you use when procrastinating. Self-care means doing something with the intention of caring for your physical, emotional, mental, and/or spiritual wellness. When we



are stalling or procrastinating, we often engage in activities that provide short-term reward with no long-term benefit.

If you're interested in learning more about the link between procrastination and emotions, check out this article from BBC Worklife: [Why procrastination is about managing emotions, not time](#)

## References

Information included in this article was obtained from the following sources:

[The Psychology of Procrastination](#)

[Why procrastination is about managing emotions, not time](#)

[How to stop procrastinating – from a procrastination psychologist](#)

[Overcome Procrastination By Understanding It \(8 Ways to Make Progress\)](#)

[Procrastination Is Really Perfectionism](#)