Ten common reasons for Procrastinating

**Reason for Procrastinating - #1:** The task feels overwhelming, as if you either have to do all of now or it is not worth your time. This “all-or-nothing” psychology is the most common reason for procrastinating.

**Solution - #1:** Break up the task into small tasks to be accomplished in small units of time. Make the tasks and time units so small that they seem easy and require little effort. Make each one self-contained, and reward yourself for completing each one.

**Reason for Procrastinating - #2:** There’s something that seems more important at the moment, even though you know that the task you are putting off is important and should be done soon. The problem here is that your priorities are not clear. You have not yet decided what is the most important thing to do next.

**Solution - #2:** Examine the consequences of not doing the task. What will happen if you do NOT do it now? Why is something else more important? What kinds of risks are you taking in putting off this task? Re-check your priorities.

**Reason for Procrastinating - #3:** Fear of being evaluated. You are worried that if you start this task but do not complete it adequately, others will view you (and you will view yourself) as being inadequate and as having failed. It is easier not to start something than to start it and fail.

**Solution - #3:** Ask yourself who is going to evaluate you, and by what standards? Do you believe that when you do this task, it has to be done perfectly or better than anyone else could do it? Decide if these expectations are reasonable or not. Decide if any fears or worries you have are realistic or not.

**Reason for Procrastinating #4:** Memory loss – “I just forgot!” You may have other commitments on your plate and this is just one more thing.

**Solution - #4:** This is a good reason to look at your time management skills and see how you have planned your commitments over the semester. Attend one of the time management workshops to get some tips on how to manage your time more efficiently.

**Reason for Procrastinating #5:** Naiveté or ignorance: “I didn’t know I was supposed to do that.”

**Solution - #5:** This is a very good reason to attend all your classes. Be more involved with your classes and your classmates. By forming a study group you get a good idea of what is going on in the classroom. If you are away for a lecture make sure you catch up either by asking the lecturer for any information you may have missed of getting another classmate to take down notes.
**Reason for Procrastinating #6:** Physical problems: “I couldn’t do it, I was too sick, too tired etc.”

**Solution - #6:** If you have physical reasons why you cannot complete a task let the lecturer know. If you have been ill you may be able to apply for an extension but if you do not discuss this with anyone how are they to know.

**Reason for Procrastinating - #7:** “There’s plenty of time, so I don’t have to do it all now. I can put it off for a few days.”

**Solution - #7:** There’s only “plenty of time” if you actually use it to get something done. If you have 4 days to do something, you can do 25% of the job each day. If you decide that you have “plenty of time” and do not have to do anything today, you then have only 3 days to do the job, but now you have to do 33% each day. Therefore, you’re actually making it tougher, not easier. So, if you find yourself using this reason for procrastinating, realize that the amount of work you are going to have to do per day will be more, not less. Recognize that it is easier, not harder, if you do at least a portion of the job today.

**Reason for Procrastinating - #8:** Skill deficiencies: “But I don’t know how to!” You are not sure how to do the task, so you decide to put it off.

**Solution - #8:** Examine the skills, knowledge, and resources you need to do the task. Even if you think you can’t do it well, make up your mind to do what you CAN do, and to do the best you can. Do the aspects of the task that you know you can do. Or, find out what you need to do to complete the task. After all, if you don’t have the skills today, and you do nothing about it, you also won’t have the skills tomorrow, and tomorrow you will have one less day to do the job.

**Reason for Procrastinating - #9:** “I’m not in the mood”. You simply feel too tired, bored, or disinterested, and decide to put off the task.

**Solution - #9:** Examine your priorities. Is this task really that important. If it is, treat it as if it is a chore rather than an activity requiring interest and motivation. You may never be “in the mood” so how else is it going to be done. Do it and get it over with.

**Reason for Procrastinating #10:** Fixed habits: “But I’ve always done it this way! It’s too hard to change.”

**Solution - #10:** Just because you have always done something in a certain way does not mean it needs to stay that way. Procrastination is a learned habit and as such can be unlearned. It generally takes 32 days to change a habit so be persistent.

These are the most common reasons for procrastination. If there are others that apply to you, write them down and think of a specific solutions for each one.

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