

Procrastination

Procrastination is putting off until tomorrow what you should have done yesterday. It is a strategy to cope with situations that produce fear and anxiety. The following are some procrastination 'traps' and options for managing them more effectively.

Lack of interest in subject

- Read actively, converse mentally with the author, question his/her viewpoint, anticipate his/her conclusions, attempt to disprove his/her ideas.
- Learn to use an effective method of study. Surveying and raising questions about the material arouses interest in what is to be read.
- Be alert to ways in which your course relates to your life and the current scene.

Lack of goals for each study session

- Plan ahead exactly what you expect to accomplish in a study session.
- Plan an enjoyable activity as a reward for a job well done.

Reading and/or study skills need refinement

- Meet with an academic coach for ways to develop these skills.
- Research/learn new, more effective approaches to textbook study.

Trouble getting started

- Have a place to study and be properly equipped.
- Enforce a starting time. The sooner you begin, the sooner you are done.
- A brief review is helpful in getting started.

Daydreaming (an escape from work)

- Have only one course's material on your desk at one time.
- Jot down your irrelevant thoughts and come back to them later.

Worrying about personal problems

- Go to the appropriate student service area for help - University Counseling Services, Financial Aid, Health Center, etc.

Deadlines

- Keep a calendar of assignment deadlines and appointments.



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- Make a schedule with definite times for studying and completing assignments.

Isolation

- Meet with a classmate & get started
- Meet with a tutor
- Talk about it to a significant other.

Difficulty sticking with a schedule/planner

- Start small - fill in a week's schedule with only essentials – e.g., classes, work, exercise then write down any minutes you do study.

Feeling discouraged - not making enough progress

- If you solve 5 problems but not 10, if you read 30 pages instead of 50, recognize that you are making progress (doing *something*) and give yourself some credit.

Feeling dissatisfied with the quality of work completed

- Everyone's quality of work varies at times.
- Grades are not a measure of self-worth.

Difficulty 'settling-in' to study

- Choose an item, like a hat, that you put on when (and only when) you are studying, or an item that you place on your desk as you study.
- Relax your body before starting to study.
- Give yourself an affirmation and/or an image that will motivate you.
- Find a transition activity that will move you in a positive direction towards studying. For example, if you have a paper to write, break the task down by starting to copy a favorite passage or poem from a book. Once you have the momentum for writing, you will find it easier to change subjects and begin your paper.

Wasting Time

- Develop a contract that suits your needs. For example, if you observe that it takes you 30 minutes of procrastinating before you begin to study, contract with yourself to reduce that time to 20 minutes by defining a motivating reward (or punishment).