



Procrastination Tips

A-State Online Writing Center

We all procrastinate, but how do you shake it off on the harder days to accomplish your goals? Reference these best practices below to push through procrastination.

What are the underlying issues?

Ask yourself why you are putting off a project. Is it boring to you? Does it scare you? Have you not prepared adequately? Try writing down your thoughts or asking yourself internally or aloud why you're avoiding completing the task.

Day one or one day?

“Day one or one day: you decide.” Take this mantra to heart and tell yourself you'll start the project today. Beginning is usually the hardest phase to push through.

Tackle larger projects first

Are you pushing off a specific aspect of a project that seems harder than the others? Do it first and do it as soon as possible in the day to be done with it so you can move on. If you don't finish, you can come back to it another time and work on other aspects.

Remove major distractions

It's tempting to have your phone, fun music, friends, TV shows, or whatever else near you to make the task less daunting. However, it's easy to get distracted by external stimuli. While it can be important to leave your phone on, try leaving the ringer on and then place the phone in another room. You can also let those close to you know that you're going to be in study mode for a while and not to contact you unless it's an emergency.

Make a schedule

Try making a detailed daily schedule. We all tend to have multiple courses, jobs, or personal things to do, so creating a schedule and sticking to it enables you to set aside certain hours for certain tasks. Then you can transition to the next task.

Set small goals

Rather than set overly ambitious goals, set small achievable goals that make sense within your schedule parameters. For instance, rather than say you will finish all of your research in one day, say you will find research for x number of hours that day and stick to it.

Establish an accountability partner

If you have someone that can keep you on track, ask them to check in with you. You're more likely to feel compelled to complete the task so you don't return to the conversation empty-handed. Better yet, they can celebrate with you once you complete the task.

Don't beat yourself up

We all procrastinate, and that's ok! Don't let past mistakes or moments of being human get you down. Take a breath, let it go, and move forward.

Move to a different location

Sometimes, remaining in one spot can make you feel stagnant and tired. Try switching places if possible. Move to another room, another section of the library, another office, etc. to energize yourself.

Delayed gratification

Reward yourself with a periodic break at least once an hour unless you feel like you're on a roll. Let yourself walk around, stretch, check social media, or whatever else you can look forward to after working. You can also reward yourself at the end of the day or perhaps when you finally complete your project with a bigger reward (i.e. watching a movie with take out when you're done with your paper).

Works Consulted/Additional Resources

- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/vanessaloder/2016/04/15/10-scientificallly-proven-tips-for-beating-procrastination/#17719e60296a>
- <https://www.collegexpress.com/articles-and-advice/majors-and-academics/blog/top-10-ways-avoid-procrastination/>