

# Procrastination

Work Smarter,  
Not Harder

## Definition



Procrastination is not usually a sign of laziness, but instead is a stress response to a task or activity. The reasons why we procrastinate may be different for each person, but what we have in common is that we have to learn strategies and habits that will help us overcome our urge to procrastinate.

## Why we procrastinate

- Perfectionist: wants to be able to complete a task perfectly
- Dreamer: not good at paying attention to details
- Defier: doesn't believe someone else should dictate their time
- Worrier: fear of change or leaving the comfort of the "known"
- Crisis-maker: likes working under pressure (for motivation)
- Overdoer: takes on too much and struggles to find enough time



## Tips & Strategies

- Keep a planner journal to note what does (not) work for you
- Deal with your negative emotions/stress (e.g. journal)
- Remove the distractions that interrupt your focus (e.g. turn off your phone/notifications)
- Focus on the process, not on the end product (e.g. commit to studying for 20 minutes, not until a specific task is done)
- Break an assignment into smaller tasks
- Write down a to-do list each night for the next day
- Commit to certain daily routines and tasks
- Cultivate an attitude of self-compassion and a growth mindset
- Celebrate when you finish a task

## Develop a new habit

1. Acknowledge the stress
2. Take a breath
3. Identify a strategy
4. Start using it for 5 minutes

## Breaks are important

Occasional breaks will help you retain the information you're learning, help spark creativity, and will help maintain your motivation.

Works consulted: Oakley, Barbara. A Mind for Numbers: How to Succeed at Math and Science (Even If You Flunked Algebra). 31 July 2014.; Shilton, A.C. "How to Tell if Your Brain Needs a Break." The New York Times, 3 Feb. 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/03/well/mind/brain-break-focus-productivity.html>; Mel Robbins. "The ONLY Way to Stop Procrastinating". YouTube, May 2023, <https://youtu.be/4x7MKLDGnu8>; TED-Ed. "Why you procrastinate even when it feels bad". TED, May 2023, [https://www.ted.com/talks/ted\\_ed\\_why\\_you\\_procrastinate\\_even\\_when\\_it\\_feels\\_bad/](https://www.ted.com/talks/ted_ed_why_you_procrastinate_even_when_it_feels_bad/).