

PROCRASTINATION STOPPERS

1. Make sure that this is a task that you actually want to do, ie. That there are real benefits for you in carrying out this task and that it accords with your priorities and goals.
2. Think about procrastination as a primitive problem solving technique. Diagnose the problem that you've been trying to solve and focus on alternative solutions (eg. Exactly what worries me about this task? How can I manage these concerns?)
3. The Swiss Cheese approach – Make holes in a task that appears overwhelming. Do anything related to the task.
4. The Salami Technique - List all the different steps you have to take to complete a job. Concentrate on taking the first step, then the next, etc. Keep your attention on the individual sections rather than allowing yourself to be daunted by the fuller picture. (This approach is called the salami technique because a slice of salami at a time is considered more appetising than eating the whole sausage.)
5. Ten-minute plan - work on a large task for a minimum of 10 minutes a day.
6. Plan tasks in advance and make sure that you have the equipment and information you need in order to proceed. (Hint: visualising yourself carrying out the task may help.)
7. Spend a few minutes in advance thinking what you want to achieve next time you sit down to work and how you will get started. You can do this while lying in bed, doing the washing up, having your early morning walk, going home on the bus etc.
8. Set 'warm up' tasks to get started eg. Brainstorming exercise, re-reading notes, organising your material.
9. Set time limits - List the tasks you plan to do at a single sitting and how long you expect to take to complete each of them. (Helps prevent you from doing a 'Go Slow' – but make sure you're being realistic)
10. When you are tempted to give up work take a minute to check what has caused you to lose energy. If you are avoiding an aspect of the task, problem solve to find a way of approaching it. You could take a few minutes to review your progress so far and set a new goal. You could tell yourself to spend at least another five minutes before taking a break. This may be enough to get you past your stuck spot.
11. Arrange your work environment to be attractive and inviting.
12. Go to a different place to work where your usual distractions are not present.
13. Make a contract with a friend, letting them know specifically what you plan to achieve and by when. Then contact them to let them know how you went.
14. Arrange to work alongside somebody who works well.
15. Get somebody to help you, eg. Act as a sounding board for you to work out a decision, or clarify ideas.
16. Think about what you actually like about the task (eg. finding out new information, solving a problem). Make sure you're not exaggerating the negative aspects. If the task itself has no enjoyable aspects,

find ways to make the process more enjoyable (eg. music, flowers by the desk, rewards, noting achievements, contests etc)

17. Find friends who are active and who get things done.
18. Set a reward for completing your goal or sub-goals.
19. Make a contract with yourself to put off something you want to do until you have completed a specific task.
20. Schedule time off that is pleasurable
21. Focus on giving encouraging messages to yourself rather than bullying, self-criticising or despairing messages.
22. Critically evaluate any excuses not to go ahead with the task.
23. Be assertive with people who want to distract you.
24. Make a wall chart on which you demonstrate your progress/achievements.
25. Write a dialogue with the part of you that doesn't want to do the task so that you bring your inner conflicts into awareness.
26. Adopt a positive attitude to decision making. Stop envisaging it as a choice between getting it right or getting it wrong. Most decisions will have positive aspects to each option.
27. Visualise yourself successfully carrying out your task and enjoying the benefits.
28. Consciously change your language patterns from language that suggests lack of control and failure to language that emphasises personal choice and power (eg. "I will do it" instead of "I'll try to do it", "I won't do it" or "I can do it" instead of "I can't do it")
29. Make a poster displaying a pertinent affirmation or inspiring statement. Some examples would be:
 - I am intelligent and capable*
 - I am balancing my needs to work and to have fun*
 - I can be successful without being perfect*
 - Very few decisions are wrong. Whatever I decide will be ok*
 - Every day I am developing my abilities through experimenting and risk taking*
 - I can finish, let go and move on*
 - I am creative, competent and productive.*
 - It's ok for me to be successful*
 - I am using all my resources to meet my goals*
 - Change a habit - do it now!*
 - Focus on the present not the future*
 - One step at a time - keep moving forward*
 - "Whatever you can do or dream, you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now" (Goethe)*
 - "Ships in harbour are safe, but that's not what ships are built for". (John Shedd)*
30. Tap into the personal resources that have helped you overcome obstacles in other situations (eg. determination, courage, creativity, perseverance). Recall examples of when you have pushed through resistance and accomplished things in the past.

More information:

Centre for Clinical Interventions – Resources Webpage:

<http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/consumers.cfm>