

# Anti-Procrastination Tips

## Awareness is the first step towards change.

Procrastination is the voluntary delay of an intended task.

- Notice when you have an intention and do not follow it through.
- What were your thoughts and feelings about the task?
- What are the excuses you have about putting the task off?



## Beware of negative 'just's'.

- "I'll **just** check my Facebook",
- "I'll **just** check my emails".
- "I'll **just** go to the café for a coffee.
- "it'll only take a minute".

## Beware of the temptations of social networking sites.

- We are social beings, so sites such as Facebook are rewarding. The reward is immediate. This is potentially an addictive combination.
- Social media also provides a ready distraction. This can be a problem for people who are impulsive.

## Identify your own set of 'most commonly used' excuses and self-deceptions.

- Make a list of them and practice spotting them.
- Make a plan of how you will deal with difficult circumstances before they arise.
- If you are a person who is prone to worry, fear of failure or perfectionism, challenge your worries and beliefs as they arise.

## Identify the costs of procrastinating.

- Make a list of:
  - ❖ all the negative costs of procrastination.
  - ❖ the benefits of acting in a timely fashion.
- Making change takes effort. Clearly identifying the costs of procrastination and benefits of change can help you to maintain your motivation as you make these changes.

**Recognise that although your mind may tell you that you will feel more like doing it 'tomorrow', you won't.**

- You don't need to 'really feel like it' to get on with the task.
- Be suspicious of your mind when it tells you that you will feel more like it tomorrow.
- Don't listen to this message, and instead "Just get started".
- 'just getting started' helps us to feel more motivated, energised and 'in the mood'.
- Take one small step then another. Once you get started, you will find it easier to keep going.

**We tend to over-estimate the difficulty and unpleasantness of tasks.**

- Once we start a task, it is rarely as bad as we think.
- Progress on our goals makes us feel happier and more satisfied with life and with ourselves.

**There are no "quick fixes".**

Procrastination is a habit that requires hard work to break.

- On-going conscious effort and vigilance is required.
- Be strategic in your change effort.
- Pick one or two things to work on at once rather than try to change everything.
- Be kind but firm with yourself when you have a setback. Forgive yourself and start back into work again.

**Procrastination is a form of self-regulation failure.**

We put off doing a task that we don't want to do, to avoid the negative feelings associated with that task.

- We trade in temporary relief for longer term problems.
- Move your attention to something that will help you feel motivated
- Actively access more positive thoughts, such as curiosity and the desire to succeed.
- Avoid getting stuck in the negative emotions associated with the task.

**Adapted from: Angela Baker for Massey Student Counselling Service. Used from Anti-Procrastination Strategies from "The Procrastinator's Digest: A concise guide to solving the procrastination puzzle" by Timothy Pynchyl.**