

Putting off the Inevitable: Procrastination

A 2002 study by Dr. Bruce Tuckman of Ohio State University showed that procrastinators consistently receive lower grades than non-procrastinators. Students who procrastinate believe that the quality of their work is just as good as if they had completed their assignment with time to spare; however, that is generally not the case. Good work takes a lot of time, and students should plan accordingly.

Are you a procrastinator? If you answer yes to one or more of the following, you need to pay special attention to goal setting and time management in order to get your assignments in on time and avoid cramming for exams at the last minute.

Do you:

- Put off starting tasks (like studying, papers, or projects), especially if it is something you are not interested in or don't want to do?
- Put off finishing tasks even if they're important?
- Start assignments and study for tests at the last minute?
- Find ways to waste time, like surfing the internet or playing video games?
- Always leave bills and other errands for the last minute?

Although people procrastinate for many different reasons, there are several simple techniques you can use to help stay on track:

Budget your time. Figure out how long a task will take to complete and then double it. Build extra time to revisions and review.

Clear your desk. Keep your desk or study area free of distractions. The more orderly you make your workspace, the easier you will find it to concentrate on the task at hand.

Set goals. Set weekly or even daily deadlines for yourself to accomplish a portion of a paper or project before it is due. This will help you stay on track and leave time for any tasks you may not have considered.

Remind yourself. Before going to bed, remind yourself what needs to be accomplished the next day. When you wake up, check your schedule and try to keep to it as best as you can.

Reward yourself. Everyone works more efficiently when they have incentives. Reward yourself for finishing a project on time.

Get help when you need it. If you are still finding it difficult to keep procrastination at bay, talk to your advisor. Your advisor will be able to help you keep on track.

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