

PROCASTINATION

Sometimes, we delay doing an important task and choose to do something else instead. Putting things off or leaving them to the last minute can impact us negatively as it increases our stress and makes the task seem even more daunting. Here are some tips to stop procrastination, improve your motivation and focus using mindfulness.

UNDERSTAND YOUR HABITS

Once you identify that you are procrastinating (i.e., delaying a task until a later time), identify why you do it. For example, are you afraid of failure, feeling overwhelmed or unprepared, worried about being perfect or finding the task too difficult or boring? It's helpful to identify what you are doing instead of completing the task so you can manage those distractions.

IDENTIFY FAULTY THINKING

The way that you talk to yourself has a big impact on your motivation to get important things done.


- "I'm not in the mood, I'll wait until I feel like doing it"
- "I work better under time pressure"
- "I haven't got enough time now, I'll do it tomorrow"
- "It's too late today, I'll start it tomorrow"

All of these excuses involve faulty thinking.

MINDFULNESS – USE THE POWER OF YOUR MIND!


Notice thoughts that stop you studying, like excuses or faulty thinking. Without judging yourself, just notice what happens when you get "hooked" by these unhelpful thoughts:-

- Motivation decreases
- Procrastination increases
- You label yourself as lazy or bad.

 To unhook from these unhelpful thoughts – imagine they are like clouds in the sky – they come and they go – and keep returning your attention again and again back to your task.


USE MOTIVATING SELF-TALK

- "I'm not enjoying this task but I'm going to feel great once I've done it."
- "I can do this!"
- "I'm doing what I need to achieve my goal."
- "I have done assignments in the past and I can do it again now."
- "Every time I work on this task I'm a step closer to completing it."
- "I've completed some of it – I just need to keep going now."

 Notice how you are thinking, and talking to yourself. Talk to yourself in ways that remind you of your goals.

BREAK TASKS DOWN TO SUB-TASKS

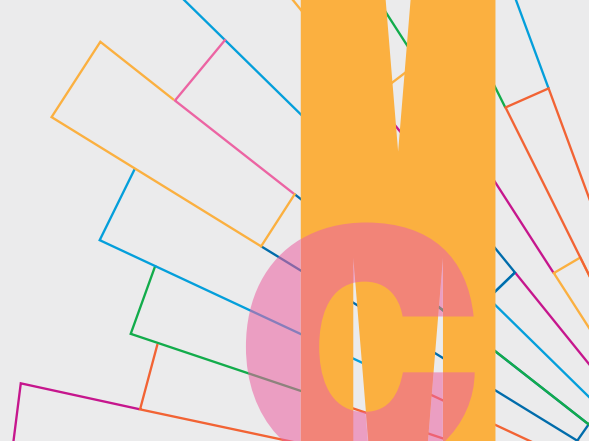
Tasks can seem daunting when you think about completing the entire task. Break it down into sub-tasks (or steps) so you don't feel daunted because you can start on the first step and once that's done you can approach the next step.

 Small tasks seem more manageable and you will feel good about yourself and stay motivated every time you complete a step towards your goal.

USE MOMENTUM

Start with an easy or enjoyable task and once you're feeling productive, use that energy and momentum to work on a more difficult or less enjoyable task. This strategy helps you overcome unhelpful thoughts like "I'm not in the mood to do the task now".

PROCRASTINATION



SEIZE THE MOMENT

As soon as you remember you have something you should do, just do it - don't give yourself any time to think or talk yourself out of doing what needs to be done.



- Schedule time in the day to focus on problem-solving.
- Make a list of things to do tomorrow before going to bed. Take action each day to complete tasks.



START WITH 5 MINUTES

Starting can be the hardest part so tell yourself "I'm going to work on this for 5 minutes".

Typically, once you've made a small start, you will feel more motivated to keep going.



REWARD YOURSELF

You will be more motivated if you reward yourself when you finish each task. Rewards might include time out for a favourite past-time or hobby, a special food treat, or a movie with a friend.



WORK WHEN YOU'RE MOST PRODUCTIVE

For some people that's early in the morning. For others, it's late at night. There's no right or wrong. Just find what works best for you.