

Beat Procrastination: *Get 'er Done!*

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Originally published in *Doing Good*, the e-newsletter of *do good Consulting*, December 2006,
<http://www.dogoodconsulting.org/newsletter/december06.html>

Putting off important tasks over and over again? You are not alone: most people procrastinate to some degree. The key to controlling this habit is to recognize procrastination, understand why it happens, and take active steps to better manage your time and outcomes. Here are some great tips to help you:

ONE: Recognize You Are Procrastinating

To know when you are procrastinating, you first need to know your priorities. Putting off unimportant tasks is not necessarily procrastination, rather it is probably good prioritization. Take steps to identify your priorities, and work from a prioritized to-do list daily. Procrastination indicators include:

- Filling your days with low priority to-do list tasks;
- Reading emails/items on your to-do list repeatedly without starting work on them (or deciding when you are going to start work on them);
- Sitting down to start a high-priority task, and immediately finding something else to do (make coffee, check email);
- Leaving an item on your to-do list for a long time, even though you know it's important;
- Regularly saying "yes" to unimportant tasks others ask you to do; filling your time with these instead of working on the important tasks already on your list.

TWO: Determine Why You Are Procrastinating

Why you procrastinate can depend on both you and the task:

- You find the task unpleasant; or
- You find the task overwhelming.

It is important to understand what the reasons for procrastination are for each situation, so that you can select the best approach for overcoming your reluctance to get going.

THREE: Get over it!

Putting things off because you just do not want to do them? Try these techniques to motivate yourself:

- Create incentives. Promise yourself a nice lunch if you complete a certain important and high priority task by noon.
- Have a friend check up on you. Peer pressure - the principle behind self-help groups - really works and is a highly effective approach.
- Visualize and write out the unpleasant consequences of not doing the task.

- If your procrastination is project-based, try this:
 - Create an action plan by breaking the large project into a set of smaller, more manageable tasks that are a part of getting the overall project accomplished.
 - Next, start with some of the quick, small tasks on that list, even if they are not the logical first actions. This should help you to build some momentum.

As you cross these items off your to-do list, you will feel a sense of accomplishment and the whole project will begin to appear more approachable and achievable.

Contact ***do good Consulting*** at 217-778-1687 or dogood@dogoodconsulting.org for more information on time management, reducing stress at work, creating goals, and developing actions plans. Also, for additional tools on managing your time, go to www.mindtools.com/.

