



The procrastination toolbox

Do you find that you often put off until next month what you could have done yesterday? You're not alone. People put things off for many reasons, including:

- Not setting a personal deadline
- Taking on too many other tasks and projects
- Fear of failure
- Getting stuck on one step

But if you never get started or push through the barriers, you'll never cross the finish line, either.

Tips for Procrastinators

Most of us have, at one time or another, done the “P” word and experienced its effects:

- wasted time
- poor performance
- missed opportunities
- self-deprecation
- increased stress

Why do we as human beings procrastinate? Fear of failure, perfectionism, or having to face an uncomfortable situation are many times the culprit. Regardless of the reason, the following are a few tips for bringing procrastination under control.

Set clear, manageable, measurable goals for example: instead of determining to “finish taxes earlier this year,” try “I’ll work on my taxes for two hours each weekend in March.”

Partialize the tasks

Break the project down into pieces. This works especially well with unpleasant tasks--handling duties we dislike is more palatable when done for shorter periods of time.

Avoid the contingency play

In the contingency play finishing one task is contingent upon the completion of another—try to avoid this as much as possible. For example, reading all the material on fitness equipment is not really necessary before beginning an exercise program.

Go for the immediate reward

Refusing to allow yourself any enjoyment until the entire project is complete is counterproductive. Begin rewarding yourself for the various steps accomplished. For example: “I’ve slogged through this research for two hours, I’ll take a break and enjoy a cup of coffee.”

Consciously celebrate your successes

Self-reinforcement has a powerful effect on developing a "do it now" attitude. Don't minimize what you've done!

