

Prioritise the Right Things:

The A-B-C-D-E Method

The best method for setting priorities on your list, once you have determined your major goal or objectives, is the A-B-C-D-E method. You place one of those letters in the margin before each of the tasks on your list before you begin.

- “A” stands for “very important” – something you must do. There can be serious negative consequences if you don’t do it.
- “B” stands for “important” – something you should do. This is not as important as your “A” tasks. There are only minor negative consequences if it not completed.
- “C” stands for things that are “nice to do”, but which are not as important as “A” or “B” tasks. There are no negative consequences for not completing it.
- “D” stands for “delegate”. You can assign this task to someone else who can do the job instead of you.
- “E” stands for “eliminate”, whenever possible”. You should eliminate every single activity you possibly can, to free up your time.

Never do a “B” task when there is an “A” task outstanding. Never do a “C” task when there is an “A” or “B” task outstanding, etc.

Using this method, it’s easier to sort out what is important and what is less important. This will focus your time and attention on those items on your first list that are most essential for you to do.

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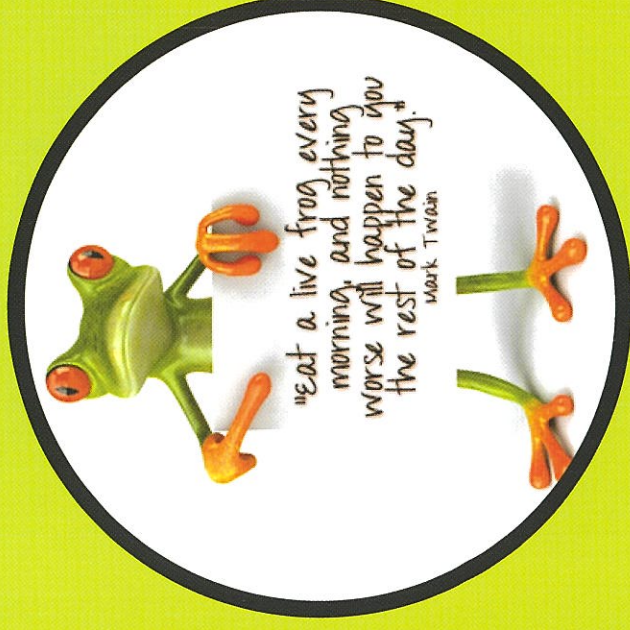
Available 24/7/365

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PROCRASTINATION

Don't wait till tomorrow to beat it!



Aim to ‘eat a frog’ first thing, every day!

Not literally, of course, but get your worst task out of the way first!



Procrastination

In a nutshell, procrastination is putting off things you should be doing, in favour of things you'd rather be doing – often because they're more fun or you feel that you're better at other tasks.

YOU are not alone!

If you've found yourself putting off important tasks over and over again, you're not alone. In fact, many people procrastinate to some extent – but some are so chronically affected by procrastination so much that it stops them finishing important assignments or studying for exams.

Okay, but what can you do?

The first step to a more organised, productive and fun student life is to recognise that you're prone to procrastinating. Consider some of the reasons for your particular type of procrastinating, understand why it happens (even to the best of us!) and take active steps to managing your time and resources better. Procrastinating often leads to feeling guilty when spending time with friends or engaging in fun activities, which makes this time less fun than it could be.

TAKE CONTROL NOW!

Ask yourself

Am I filling my days with unimportant tasks? Is this the 20th time I've checked my e-mails/Facebook/Twitter/WhatsApp... in the last hour? Have I sat down to work on my assignment and almost immediately gone to make a cup of coffee? Do I leave assignments or studying till the very last minute, every time?

Figure out WHY?

Is the task at hand unpleasant? Difficult? Boring? Are you disorganised? Never been very good at planning or time management? Are you overwhelmed? Are you a perfectionist? Do you battle with decision making?

Procrastination is a habit...

...and habits can be changed! It's probably taken you a while to get into the habit of putting things off till the last minute, so change won't happen overnight. Habits only stop when you have doggedly stopped practicing them, so use as many methods as possible to increase your chances of breaking the habit, being more productive and, ultimately, being less stressed!

Tips to get you MOVING

- Make up your own rewards. For example, promise yourself a treat at lunchtime if you've completed a certain task... and make sure you notice how good it feels to finish things!
- Ask someone else to check up on you... positive peer pressure works!
- Identify the unpleasant consequences of NOT doing the task, such as going into the exams with low semester marks.

If you're procrastinating because you're disorganised, here's how to get organised:

- Keep a To-Do list using the **A-B-C-D-E** method outlined, so that you can't "conveniently" forget about unpleasant or overwhelming tasks.
- Set yourself time-bound goals. That way, you'll have no time for procrastination!
- Focus on one task at time.

If you're putting off starting a project because you find it overwhelming, you need to take a different approach. Here are some tips:

- Break the project into a set of smaller, more manageable tasks.
- Start with some quick, small tasks if you can, even if these aren't the logical first actions. You'll feel that you're achieving things and feel less overwhelmed.

If you're doing it because you find the task unpleasant:

- Many procrastinators overestimate the unpleasantness of a task. So, give it a try... you may find that it's not as bad as you thought!
- Keep the unpleasant consequences of not doing the task at the front of your mind.
- Reward yourself for doing the task.

If you have a genuinely good reason for rescheduling something important, then you're not necessarily procrastinating. BUT, if you're simply "making an excuse" because you really just don't want to do it, then you are procrastinating!