



Office of Learning Resources

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One of These Days I'll Stop Procrastinating

Everyone puts things off once in awhile, but habitual procrastinators are setting themselves up for failure. Keep in mind that pressure situations are also highly stressful, and stress interferes with your ability to learn and remember.

For most chronic procrastinators, the problem is nothing more than one of **project management**. Students need to learn how to analyze the work ahead of them and to prioritize what needs to be done. To become a better project manager, try using the guidelines below, listed as a series of stages: Preview, Plan, Schedule, Get Started, and Get it Done. This framework should be applicable to most school-related projects.

Preview

At this stage, you can ease your way into the project. Frequently, students procrastinate because they don't know where to begin, which is why this stage is so crucial. Scan the assignment to get a sense of the ideas being discussed or the actions you must take to complete this particular project. If you don't understand something, seek clarification.

Plan

Brainstorm a "to-do" list of short term goals that need to be accomplished for your project. For smaller projects, this can be a mental list; otherwise, you should make a written list. What seems like a formidable task—like studying for a final or writing a 20-page paper—becomes more manageable once it's broken down into smaller pieces. Prioritize your list into a plan of steps in a process. Once you have a plan, your project will certainly feel less daunting.

Schedule

Estimate how long it should take you to go through each of the steps in your plan and schedule specific days and times to complete each step. Be flexible; it's okay to move things around on your schedule so long as you still leave time to get it done. Furthermore, it is important to be realistic with your time commitments, so remember to build in some additional time for each step in case you underestimate. Also, be aware that you may have to go back and do more research or review.

Get started

Having gone through all of the above stages, you should be ready to go. Make an appointment with yourself and keep it. If you're still having difficulty, sit with your plan and your materials and do anything as long as it's connected with your project. Soon enough, your sense of priorities will kick in and you'll find yourself moving along. Or perhaps it would help to work with a partner, but only if you get the work done!

Get it done

Congratulate yourself after you have tackled each step. Build small rewards into your plan to keep you going. Accomplishing your goals each step of the way should give you a new sense of achievement and help to boost your confidence and self-esteem

Applying this framework should help you to develop your own personalized, systematic approach to project management. If, at any stage of the process, you find yourself getting stuck, make an appointment with a Learning Instructor to discuss your specific situation.