

AVOIDING PROCRASTINATION

You know you are **procrastinating** when you keep avoiding or delaying doing a task you need to do – for example, getting started on writing an assignment.

Almost everyone **procrastinates** at least some of the time but it can become a habit leading to increased stress and anxiety.

The good news is that procrastination is a learned behaviour, so **it can be unlearned!**

Step 1: Challenge beliefs that encourage you to put things off till the last minute – beliefs such as:

- ✗ I always work better under pressure.
- ✗ I don't know how to do this task so I'll put it off till I know how to do it.
- ✗ I find it easier to work when I feel like it.
- ✗ I waited till the last moment before and it worked out okay...
- ✗ If I wait till the last minute, I won't spend so much time on it.
- ✗ If I do this work right now I might miss out on something more important.
- ✗ I've got better things to do right now. I'll do it later!
- ✗ If I do it at the last minute I'll have more information / better ideas.

TIP: If you find yourself putting things off, think about why you are procrastinating - it could be that you are unsure of where to start. You can get help with starting/finishing your study tasks at [WRITE Smart drop-in](#).

Step 2: Develop good study habits and beliefs that support you:

- ✓ **Recognise** that procrastination is a self-management issue and you can change your behaviour.
- ✓ **Acknowledge** when you are procrastinating and why.
- ✓ **Challenge** each reason you give for procrastinating.
- ✓ **Begin** with an aspect of a difficult task that you enjoy.
- ✓ **Break up** difficult or 'dry' work into sections. This will help you achieve each task more easily.
- ✓ **Plan** your time and stick to your plan — but make changes if you need to.
- ✓ **Set** realistic deadlines that aren't too restrictive. Monitor your progress.
- ✓ **Avoid** being a perfectionist.
- ✓ **Consider** the time you have available and work out what you can realistically do in that time. Consult with a friend to see if you are being realistic.
- ✓ **Eliminate** time wasting activities e.g. excessive housework, excessive physical exercise, excessive socialising.
- ✓ **Create** a balance between studying, keeping healthy and enjoying life.
- ✓ **Reward** yourself every time you complete a task.

The best time to start an assignment or project is as soon as you get it.

Use the STUDYSmarter [Assignment date calculator](#)

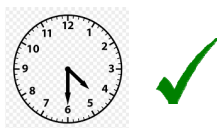
to help you get started.



The calculator breaks down your assignment / project into separate tasks. It will also help you plan the time you spend on each task.

How to unlearn procrastinating habits:

1. **Notice** *how* you procrastinate - for example, do you watch TV, go for a run, go on Facebook? The more aware you are of *when* and *why* you are procrastinating, the more likely you will be able to stop it and to use your study time effectively.
2. **Plan** your study time — have a clear purpose for each study session. When you break large tasks into smaller tasks, make a note of when you intend to complete each task. When you finish, check that you have completed the task in the time you set yourself.



3. **Make a note** of any concerns that might stop you from keeping to your time goals, such as, “I need to do more research”, “It won’t be good enough”. **Write down** ways you intend to manage these concerns if they arise; for example, “I’ll write the first draft *then* decide if I need to do more research”.
4. **Remind** yourself that there is no such thing as a “perfect” essay or assignment.
5. **Monitor** your progress. If your study plan isn’t realistic, change it — but make sure changing it is not just another chance to procrastinate! Make a specific time to change your timetable. Change it, then go back to whatever you should be studying, writing or reading.
6. **Reward** yourself. Achieve your goals first, then catch up with friends, watch TV, play tennis, etc.

DID YOU KNOW?

Rewarding yourself for achieving your goals or completing tasks is important because it will motivate you to achieve further goals. It will also make you feel good each time you finish a task.

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Any suggestions?

We would love to hear from you. Email us at studysmarter@uwa.edu.au

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