

How we procrastinate

(and may not even know it.)

Procrastination is an easy way that all of us get stuck. And yet, we may not even realize we're doing it. When we unknowingly act like an **Avoider**, we create reasons in our heads that supply us with enough logic that we can delay the task at hand—sometimes indefinitely. Recognizing these avoidance tactics is half the battle in stopping them. Here are four frequent ways that you may unwittingly delay the inevitable.

- **Waiting for perfect.** Telling yourself you need the right amount of time, physical space, equipment, you name it—and then waiting for the magic ingredients to appear.
- **No strain, no gain.** You work best under pressure, right? Not really, but it may be the only way you're used to getting things done.
- **Productive procrastination.** Taking care of all those other things you've put off in favor of what you need to get done.
- **Second guessing.** If we continually question a decision, we act like a **Waffler** and can't move forward.

9 tips to stop procrastinating

1. Remind yourself that there's always more to be done than can be done. Then ask yourself if you're getting the right things done.
2. Make a smart to-do list by including only the items that you're avoiding, not the ones you know you'll do anyway. Then set deadlines.
3. Break the task down to lessen the sense of being overwhelmed. Once you start to enjoy a small accomplishment or two, you're more likely to finish.
4. Eliminate temptation to do something else (if your Siren song is the computer, see "Tuning out digital distractions" below).
5. Bargain with yourself. If you finish the business plan now, you can go to the movies later.
6. Focus on the success you will achieve and the joy you will feel.
7. Come up with a consequence that will deter you from avoiding the task. If you don't exercise two times a week, you have to give up talking on the phone with your friends.
8. Ask someone to help you complete the task.
9. Make your intentions public. This will add pressure, but for some of us, avoiding embarrassment is the mightiest motivator.

The danger of procrastination

Letting yourself put things off can have greater implications than we may realize. To start, it fosters distress. According to [The New Yorker](#), 65% of students faced with writing a term paper said they would like to avoid procrastinating because they knew the delay would make them unhappy.

In addition to the stress and guilt that comes with procrastination, consider these other very real consequences of putting off what you need to do:

- Gaining a bad reputation with coworkers, friends, and family.
- Losing your ambition to succeed.
- Not accomplishing your dreams.
- Threatening your well-being if it is a health-related task (like an annual checkup).

Tuning out digital distractions

“E-mail is a procrastinator’s dream come true,” writes author Gayle Trend. And as much as we may love them, so are YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. To overcome digital distractions, try any of these programs designed to help you gain control over your time.

- [Self Control](#)
- [Freedom](#)
- [Rescue Time](#)
- [Vitamin R](#)
- [Concentrate](#)