

Definition of Procrastination

Several dictionaries give different meanings of procrastination. For example, Merriam-Webster: "To put off intentionally the doing of something that should be done." Dictionary.com: "To put off till another day or time; defer; delay." TheFreeDictionary.com: "To postpone or delay needlessly."

Myths about Time Management

Myth #1: Planning my time just takes more time off the things I have to do.

Contrary to popular belief, research shows the opposite.

Myth #2: I'm very busy, so I must be using my time well.

You might be using your time to do things that are urgent but unimportant, which means you will be busy but are not using your time well.

Myth #3: I feel very busy and harried, so I must have a time management problem.

Not necessarily. It depends on whether things that really need to be done are getting done.

Myth #4: Time management problems occur when there's not enough time to get things done.

Time management problems occur when you do not use your time to its fullest advantage to get important things done.

Reasons for Procrastination

One reason for procrastination is that people may not enjoy the tasks they have to do and hence keep putting it off. Many tasks have boring aspects and unpleasant parts, and it is best to get over these as quickly as possible.

Another cause is that people are disorganized. Organized people manage to fend off the temptation to procrastinate, because they will have things like to-do lists and schedules which enables them to plan their time well. They will also have thought about how long the task will take and would hence avoid being late by starting early.

Some people can also feel overwhelmed by tasks despite being organized, and this will cause a person to do smaller tasks and put off the big task for later. Unfortunately, the big task isn't going to go away – truly important tasks rarely do. Also, a person may feel that if they succeed in the big tasks, they will be given even more important tasks to complete, leading them to fear success as much as failure

Surprisingly, procrastinators can also be perfectionists. Perfectionists will put things off especially when they can't be sure that they have everything they need to complete a task perfectly.

One final major cause of procrastination is poor decision-making. If you are unsure of how to start or what to do next, you are likely to be afraid you will do something wrongly and leave the tasks for another time.

Source: http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_96.htm

Biggest Time Wasters

1. Interruptions. There will always be interruptions. It's how they're handled that wastes time.
2. Hopelessness. People "give in", "numb out" and "march through the day".
3. Poor delegation skills. This involves not sharing work with others.

Recognizing Time Management Problems

Here are some ways to tell if you are procrastinating:

- Doing all your low priority tasks on your to-do list first.
- Reading instructions several times without beginning to do anything or trying to decide what to do.
- Resolving to start an important task and then immediately going to do something else.
- Having an item perpetually on your to-do list even though it's important.
- Agreeing to do mundane things others ask you to do and filling your day with those instead of doing the more important tasks
- Waiting for the right mood or the right time to tackle the important task at hand.



<http://wishful.fileburst.com/creativetime.pdf>

Solutions to Time Management Problems

Prioritization

Prioritization is making the best use of your time and resources. Prioritization is essential in ensuring that you make the best use of your efforts and the efforts of those you are working with. It is also important when you are lacking time to complete certain tasks, as it enables you to ensure the most important things get done first. There are two effective ways to do this.

Listing:

Listing can be used when you have a diverse array of tasks to complete. After listing out all

the tasks to be completed, you can then measure the importance of each task against every other task in the list and obtain a prioritized list in which you can see what to do first.

Plotting a graph:

By categorizing tasks according to their value and profit as well as the time and effort they will take, you can find those tasks that take little time but hold great value and finish them first, leaving those that require much effort but hold little value for last.

Alternatively, you can plot importance against urgency and find tasks that are both important and urgent to do first, and leave the unimportant and non-urgent tasks to last.



Scheduling

Scheduling is a way to help you to place down what you need to achieve as well as a way to prioritize the tasks. A schedule should be planned on a regular basis in order to be most effective.

First, you must identify the time you have available which does not include eating and sleeping and “housekeeping”. Following that, decide when you will do the tasks that absolutely need to get done. Remember that for important tasks you will often need some extra time just in case you encounter a problem.

After factorizing in all tasks that must be done, you should be left with “unused time”. This is where your list of priorities can be used – start from the tasks with highest priority, fill in your schedule. Remember that a schedule is useless unless you adhere to it, so try your best to keep to your schedule, and don’t procrastinate.

How to Combat Procrastination

In order to combat procrastination, you must first understand why you are procrastinating. See the section on Reasons for time management problem above.

Otherwise, let’s get started on how to get yourself started:

- Try rewarding yourself for completing certain tasks that you have been putting off.
- Get someone to remind you/check up on you. This will help you not to forget to do what you need to do and also adds good pressure.
- Think about the unwanted consequences of not doing a task.
- If you feel that the task at hand is boring and unpleasant, try to start doing some of it – it usually isn’t so bad after all.
- If the task seems overwhelming, try to break it up into smaller, manageable parts.
- Try to start on your task by finding an easy part to do. It is usually much easier to continue once you have started than to actually begin.

Managing Studying Time

If you have a problem studying effectively, you might want to think of better ways or places or times to study. In order to better manage the time you spend on your work and study, try these:

- **Study in blocks**
Try to study for a predetermined amount of time, such as an hour or half an hour, and then take a break for five to ten minutes, returning to your work after that. This way, you won't get bored and tired so fast, which will maximize your time.
- **Get a dedicated study space**
Find a place to study away from the TV and the computer where distractions will be minimal. When studying, try keeping your handphone and game consoles somewhere else in order to prevent distractions. For example, you could head to the library or a coffee shop nearby.
- **Review notes just after class**
The first 24 hours after your class is a good time to review as it will help you to remember more of what you have learned more accurately
- **Use free time wisely**
Many small bits of time can be used every day – for example, while on the bus, while walking or while in a queue. These small bits of time can be used to review notes and free up more time.

Sources

<http://www.stopprocrastinating.net/procrastination-definition>

http://www.managementhelp.org/prsn_prd/basics.htm

<http://www.studygs.net/timman.htm>

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_96.htm

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_92.htm

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_07.htm

External Links

<http://www.teal.org.uk/sv/timemgnt.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time_management

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/success/time.html>

http://www.d.umn.edu/kmc/student/loon/acad/strat/time_manage.html

<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/pdf/time.pdf>

<http://www.time-management-solutions.com/>

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/college-success/116.html>