

Putting an End to Procrastination

SLIDE 1: "Are You a Procrastinator?"

- The definition of procrastination = to intentionally or habitually put off something that should get done
- The "Are You a Procrastinator?" quiz is available under 'Learning Strategies' on LSS homepage. (<http://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/learningsupport/strategies.html>)
 - You may already know that you have a tendency to procrastinate, but this quiz also helps you to explore the ways in which you do so

SLIDE 2: "Why Do We Procrastinate?"

- "There are more exciting things to do.": social activities, more interesting work/activities to engage in
- "I'm overwhelmed by the amount of effort this requires.": We are intimidated by daunting tasks that require a lot of time and effort, so we put them off in fear of failure or not knowing how to tackle them
 - In these instances, it is important to know your resources for tackling a challenging assignment (tutors, professor office hours, writing/math center)
- "I work better under pressure.": sometimes this is the case, but other times this can get us into a lot of trouble and supports the negative mindset that nothing is worth working on in advance
- "I'm too busy.": if this is the case, you'll need to reassess your priorities and long-term time management techniques

SLIDE 3: "The Solution is Simple..."

- Cut procrastination off at the source!
 - Start small: think of something that you've been putting off; choose a small, specific task (one that you can complete in 5 minutes or less); do the task today; tomorrow, choose another task and do it; repeat this for the week and observe how your general procrastination habits are changing
 - Manage your time effectively: visit our learning strategies page to try out some of our time management tools for planning and prioritizing responsibilities; or watch our Time Management workshop!
 - What are your low-productivity hours?: use this time to complete easy-to-do projects or casual readings
 - Prioritize!: at the beginning or end of a day make a list of the most to least important things you have to accomplish
 - Write intention statements:
 - Choose tasks from that priorities list and define what you want to accomplish, set a time limit and a reward
 - watch our "Fresh Start" online workshop to review how to set SMART goals

- Match goals with incentives
 - Don't wait until you finish a project to reward yourself – plan rewards along the way!
 - Don't count a reward as something that is already planned and you will do anyway (like going to the movies with a friend)
 - Be willing to withhold rewards if you do not complete a task
- Take tasks apart
 - Only willing to dedicate small amounts of time to a task?: fair enough! Do a little bit at a time, multiple times each day over the course of a week rather than trying to tackle it all at once!
 - Ex: A long, intimidating reading assignment - break it down by a couple pages; list these sections on a piece of paper, cross them off as you complete them and schedule breaks in between
- Know your time-wasters
 - Social media, cell phones, video games, napping, friends
 - Don't be afraid to un-plug!: lock your phone in your room and head to the lounge to knock out a couple hours of uninterrupted work!
 - Analyze the location where you typically study and determine if it's the most effective, least-distracting place for you to do work
 - Try filling time between classes in the library or an empty classroom doing work
- Exercise self-control
 - Find someone to hold you accountable
 - Learn to say no to yourself and to others/requests for your time that are not in your best interest

SLIDE 4: "A Piece of Advice From Mark Twain..."

SLIDE 5: "Mark Twain"

- "If you have to eat a frog, don't look at it for too long."
- "If you eat a frog first thing in the morning, the rest of your day will be wonderful."
- Think of the frog as an assignment you've been putting off....As students, we all have things that we don't want to do but have to complete. If you spend all your time looking at the task (frog), thinking about how gross and ugly it is, how it's going to taste...the more time you waste, and the more you discourage yourself from completing the task. If you tackle it first thing in the morning, everything else that you have to do that day will pale in comparison. It won't be weighing you down, making you anxious, or getting pushed to a later, less convenient date.

SLIDE 6: "Good Luck"

- We hope you found these quick tips helpful! Thanks for tuning in!