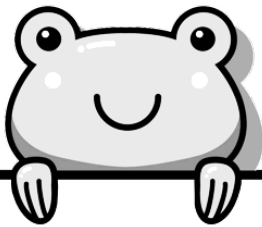


The hardest part of a task is getting started. Sometimes, you have to confront your fears and anxieties and “swallow the frog.” This worksheet will guide you through centering yourself, exploring common reasons why people procrastinate, and preparing support systems to keep you on task.

First, fill out this summary card. Don't leave anything blank. Even if your answer is “I don't know” or “nothing,” write it down. You can change your answers later.



What I need to do:

I need to do this because:

It will take me about this long to do: **I need to finish this by:**

TIME ESTIMATE

DUE DATE / TIME

I'm excited about:

I'm not looking forward to:

What are your main challenges when it comes to getting started on this task? Circle obstacles from the word cloud, or provide your own.

- distractions overwhelmed unmotivated _____
- boring task anxiety perfectionism difficult task _____
- confusing task don't know where to start tired _____
- fear of failure task doesn't feel urgent overthinking _____

Use the space below to write down any concerns and feelings about your task. You can write as much or little as you want. This is a freewriting space to help you untangle what's blocking you from starting.

Procrastination usually happens because we have charged emotions about a task, or we feel that how we perform is a reflection of our value or worth. So we avoid the tasks, then feel bad that we avoided a task, which leads to further avoidance and shame that impair our performance even more.

It's not so simple to "just do it." But developing an awareness of what you struggle with on a deeper, more fundamental level allows you to target the source of the problem and come up with productive coping mechanisms that work for you.

The following table summarizes four main strategies for tackling procrastination and provides examples on how to employ each strategy.

Make things easier for yourself	Use stimulation to your advantage	Set attainable goals	Manage your expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimize for how you actually do things, not how you "should" do things. • Find accessibility solutions. • Create a comfortable environment to work in. • Lower the bar. You don't have to solve everything all at once. Just get to something workable first. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make things fun! • Identify sensory stimuli that put you in a good mood, like colors or music, and add them to your environment. • Remove or mask distractions. • Time yourself and see if you can beat your previous time. • Take regular breaks to stretch and engage your body. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the "Goals vs. Milestones" sheet for a more detailed breakdown of how to set attainable goals. • Understand the difference between goals and milestones. • Break down tasks into manageable steps. • Something is better than nothing. • Done is better than perfect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have intrinsic value regardless of how you perform on a task. • You are allowed to make mistakes! Treat them as learning opportunities. • Identify what you can do vs. what you don't have control over. • Identify who you can ask for help and guidance. • Think of tasks as practice that add to your "experience points."

Table 1. Anti-procrastination strategies.

An action plan for procrastination means understanding how you usually respond to an obstacle, and replacing those behaviors with more productive ones that leave you feeling happier and less likely to sabotage yourself. Here are two example action plans:

Obstacle	I feel bad that I've put off a task for so long.
How I usually respond	I do something fun to take my mind off of things, like playing a videogame. And then I keep putting off the task and feel even worse for putting it off.
What I can do instead	If I feel a shame spiral coming on, I can use the HALT method (am I H ungry, A ngry, L onely, or T ired?) to assess if I need to do some basic self-care, then make another attempt at the task.
Why this helps me	Neglecting self-care intensifies my negative emotions, leading to more avoidant behavior and burnout. Doing self-care and reminding myself "better late than never" gives me an exit route from a shame spiral and more energy to handle a task.

Obstacle	I don't know where to start on this task.
How I usually respond	I feel overwhelmed and work on an easier task. This task never gets done.
What I can do instead	I can ask someone with more experience to help me break down the task into more manageable steps.
Why this helps me	Sometimes I set my expectations too high or don't have the knowledge or skills to tackle a task. Someone more experienced can guide me through prioritizing and setting more realistic expectations, and they can answer questions I might have.

Tables 2a & 2b. Example action plans.

Use the following blank templates to come up with your own action plans.

Obstacle	
How I usually respond	
What I can do instead	
Why this helps me	

Obstacle	
How I usually respond	
What I can do instead	
Why this helps me	

Obstacle	
How I usually respond	
What I can do instead	
Why this helps me	

Finally, write down some words of encouragement for yourself and some fun things you can enjoy after you've completed this task.

Words of encouragement:

Fun things to do once I'm done:

Great job! Keep this worksheet handy to remind yourself of your action plans and motivation, especially if you get frustrated.

Revise things as needed. You can do this!

