

Learning Café Quick Study Tips

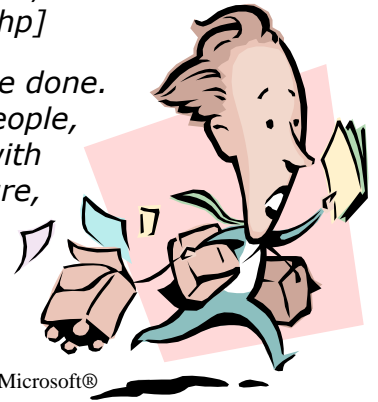
PROCRASTINATION

"Procrastination is, hands down, our favorite form of self-sabotage."

A.P. Cornyn-Selby

[Procrastination Quotes. (2007). Retrieved April 9, 2007, from <http://webapps2.ucalgary.ca/~steel/Procratinus/quotes.php>]

Procrastination is the habitual avoidance of something that should be done. Everyone has procrastinated at one time or another, but for some people, the problem of procrastination frequently & significantly interferes with their lives. Procrastinators often argue they work best under pressure, but in reality, they usually never give themselves the opportunity to demonstrate what they are truly capable of doing!



© Microsoft®

What factors contribute to procrastination?

Learning to recognize which factors are influencing your tendency to procrastinate is the first step in overcoming this behaviour & dealing with your task. Some of the common reasons people procrastinate are as follows:

- Time pressures, often due to poor time management skills
- Lack of interest in an assignment, course, or task
- Inability to recognize the importance or value of the task, perhaps because the relationship of the task to the goal is unclear
- Uncertainty about how to approach the task
- Fear of the size & duration of task
- Lack of prerequisite skills to complete the task
- Lack of confidence in your ability to do the task
- Fear of failure
- Lack of willpower or self-discipline

What are the potential consequences of procrastination?

Sometimes, the effects of procrastination are temporary & relatively unimportant; however, procrastination can cause significant problems in the long-term. Following is a list of the effects of procrastination which may have a far-reaching influence on your life:

- Failure to complete a task
- Failure to reap the rewards, both tangible & intangible, of a task
- Lowered self-worth
- Tendency to avoid participation in future activities
- An increased tendency to procrastinate in the future
- Reduced academic, professional or personal success in the future

How can you avoid procrastination?

Are you the type of person who avoids doing things you know you need to do? Following is a list of strategies which may help you overcome procrastination.

1. Make the Task Meaningful

- Look at the benefits of completing the task
- Decide how the task relates to your goals, both short & long-term
- Identify the rewards of getting the task done!

2. Keep a To-Do List

- Regularly list & prioritize tasks you need to do
- Check off items as they are completed

3. Break the Task Into Parts

- Break large tasks into small ones that can be done in a shorter time
- Make a time line for completing each small task
- Cross tasks off your list as you complete them

4. Tell someone

- Announce publicly your intention to get the task done
- Ask someone (like your instructor) to regularly check your progress on the task or to suggest ways to get it done

5. Find a Partner

- If the task is one that could be done with a partner or in a group, find someone interested in doing the task with you
- Each of you can work at motivating the other to keep going

6. Find Rewards

- Reward yourself when you legitimately complete the task
- Withhold the reward if you don't do it

7. Dive Into The Task

- Immerse yourself in the task for 15 minutes; then decide if you'll spend another 15 minutes on it
- Thinking about the task is often worse than doing it

8. Write An Intention Statement

- Write an intention statement which describes what you plan to get done & what your reward will be when you finish
- Post the paper in your study area or carry it with you -- look at it often!

9. Evaluate The Importance Of The Task

- If the task is not important, decide not to do it
- Don't beat yourself up about something you really don't intend to do

*For more information on any of the suggestions given here, please visit the Learning Café, located in the library (CE1340) / 403-382-6952 / learningcafe@lethbridgecollege.ca
Or sign up for a Student Success Workshop!*