

Overcoming procrastination: Notes

Notes from the LinkedIn Learning course *Overcoming Procrastination*.

https://www.linkedin.com/learning-login/share?account=52187153&forceAccount=false&redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.linkedin.com%2Flearning%2Fovercoming-procrastination-2%3Ftrk%3Dshare_ent_url%26shareId%3DxmwsGZb2QlqvLEMq2Dv6og%253D%253D

Reasons for procrastination

1. Despise the task
2. Lack confidence
3. Easily distracted
4. Feel overwhelmed
5. Creatively blocked

Dealing with a task you despise or dread

1. Monitor negative self-talk.
 - a. For students, this could be “I need to revise but I don’t have enough time, I’ll fail anyway, so why bother!”
 - b. Focus on the task without the emotional drama.
 - c. E.g., “I am going to make a mind map on topic X in the next hour.”
2. Focus on the value of what you are doing.

- a. E.g., “I want to be the best dentist / therapist I can be, which is why I want to learn this content.”
3. Pawn it.
 - a. E.g., give £50 to a trusted friend. If you complete the task, you get the £50 back. If you don't the friend gives it to an organisation you despise.

Dealing with a lack of confidence

1. Build the skill set you need.
 - a. Learn which study methods work for you.
 - b. E.g., use the learning resources provided by the Academic Skills team including this “Revise Well” course
<https://rise.articulate.com/share/pdlHJ12SYV7h5zAOfdgJflvhGnNj4ZfL#/>
2. Counter negative self-talk by shaking your head and rehearsing a new mantra.
 - a. E.g., when you start to think there is no point in studying, you shake your head and say the words “I have nothing to lose by trying”.
3. Start with small tasks and acknowledge these when completed as small victories.
 - a. E.g., if you have given a verbal explanation of a concept to a friend, congratulate yourself.

Staying focused

1. Create an ideal working environment free of clutter or work somewhere else that is free from distractions.

2. Close email and social media off.
3. Put your phone in another room.
4. Shut the door or put earphones in to keep out sound distractions.
5. Jot down any other tasks that come to mind on a piece of paper to deal with later.
6. Set a period of time, e.g., 25 minutes, or a task to complete before you allow yourself to check your phone or email.
7. Write down when and where you will complete the task.

Conquering the sense of overwhelm

1. Write a list called “How I will know when I am done”.
 - a. A clear endpoint is motivating.
2. Break down big tasks into bite-sized manageable bits.
 - a. E.g., break revision of a long lecture down into several tasks that include understanding two or three slides at a time.
 - b. Each group of two or three slides is a task in itself. Tick these off as you go.
3. Set interim deadlines.
 - a. E.g., if the overarching aim is to revise a whole module by a certain date, set interim dates by which you will have covered, say, 25% of the content, 50% and 75%.
 - b. Have an accountability partner whom you share these with and can hold you to them.
4. Step away for a bit.
 - a. E.g., go for a walk.

- b. But don't allow this to stall you. Set a period of time you will step away for and then come back to the task.

Unlocking creativity

1. Change the method or location of your work.
 - a. E.g., if you are writing an assignment in your room and feel blocked, go to a café or a park to work.
 - b. If you've been working on a computer and feel blocked, change to writing on paper or a whiteboard.
2. Production before perfection.
 - a. Aim on getting the task done in the first place, instead of it being perfect.
3. Use momentum-builders.
 - a. Work for 5-minutes to get the ball rolling.
 - b. Write a detailed list of what needs to happen to complete the task.