

Putting off until tomorrow what should be done today can be tempting for students. If you do this occasionally, it is probably only a time management issue. However, if your intentions rarely turn into action, despite you valuing the potential outcomes of doing something, then you are more likely to be procrastinating for reasons other than poor time management.

The origin of the term is derived from the Latin *pro* (forward or in favour of) and *crastinus* (of tomorrow) and it refers to either avoiding a task altogether or deferring it to a later, often unspecified time.

There is no single answer to this. The same students might procrastinate for different reasons at different times. However, research in the area has demonstrated some common indicators.

Procrastination appears to be a problem of motivation rather than a time management issue. If students have the motivation to do a particular task, either intrinsic or extrinsic, they are less likely to procrastinate. The value placed on the task correlates with the likelihood of procrastination.

Fear of failure is a recurring theme. For some, it can be seen as more desirable to fail a task due to lack of effort rather than completing a task and demonstrating a lack of ability. There is often a correlation between procrastination and low self-esteem. Students who have a negative perception possible confirmation of their perceived inabilities.

Other issues which can cause studen

Lack of self-discipline - transitioning from a nurturing study environment like high school to the autonomy of university can see many students struggle to become independent learners.

Unclear relevance of task to results - if a task is not seen as being important to the overall grade in a given course, then it is tempting not to give it any emphasis, despite the fact that it might have other learning/content related relevance.

The task appears too big - break down the task into manageable chunks. Only give yourself small, achievable goals such as reading one article at a time and take regular breaks between tasks. If you make your goals too big, you run the risk of being unable to meet them. Work upwards from small and simpler tasks; successful achievement can help you to tackle the more challenging ones.

Not knowing what to do - if you do not know what the task requires of you, it is important to find out sooner rather than later. Your tutors/lecturers will see your request in a positive light, as representing a desire for understanding. Knowledge is seen to be advanced through the asking of questions, so see this as a natural part of the research process rather than a knowledge deficit.

Inability to set priorities - this is one of the most significant causes of procrastination. You
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feels true for you, then it is important to examine and reorganise your priorities, both in terms of task/event and time taken in relation to them. Create a system of prioritising your commitments.

Having unrealistic expectations - this is particularly true for students in transition from

College Reading and Learning, 30, 120-134.

Senecal, C., Koestner, R., & Vallerand, R. (1995). Self-regulation and academic procrastination. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 133(5), 607-619.

Tucker-Ladd, C. (2006). *Psychological self-help*, (Chapter 4: Behaviour motivation and self control) viewed 2 March 2009, <<http://www.psychologicalselfhelp.org/>>

http://www.adelaide.edu.au/counselling_centre/resources/brochures/procrastination.html
<http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/management/external/els/pdf/procrastination.pdf>

If you are feeling anxious, you can seek assistance. Have a look at the section called *Reframe Your Thinking*, produced by the University of Adelaide Counselling Service at:

http://www.adelaide.edu.au/counselling_centre/resources/brochures/procrastination.html.

Or you may prefer to make a personal consultation time with one of the counsellors by ringing 8313 5663.