

## Need help?

### 5. Work with someone else

If you meet someone with the intention of studying together—perhaps asking each other questions or working on problems—you are less likely to procrastinate. It helps of course if the person that you are working with is interesting in studying!

### 6. Go to a place that means work

It can be very effective to consciously choose to stay at the college, often in the library, before going home or to return after dinner. Let's face it. When we go home, we often find other things to do. At home, try as much as possible to have a place that is reserved for work and without too many distractions. This does not mean your bed or on the sofa in front of the TV!

### 7. Make your goals public

Tell someone that you intend to get a certain assignment done by a certain time—and then ask that person to check on you. This small pressure can be very effective!

#### Library

*Research help. Our librarians are experts in research and they love to share their knowledge.*

Lansdowne: 250-370-3622

Interurban: 250-370-4630

[camosun.ca/services/library/](http://camosun.ca/services/library/)

#### Disability Resource Centre

*Services and accommodations for students with a documented disability, including anxiety and depression.*

Lansdowne: 250-370-3312

Interurban: 250-370-4049

[camosun.ca/services/disability-resource-centre/](http://camosun.ca/services/disability-resource-centre/)

#### Counselling

*Confidential career, personal, educational and cultural counselling for all registered students.*

Lansdowne: 250-370-3571

Interurban: 250-370-4925

[camosun.ca/services/counselling/](http://camosun.ca/services/counselling/)

#### Academic Advising

*Help with decisions about course selection, transfer options and education planning.*

[camosun.ca/services/academic-advising/](http://camosun.ca/services/academic-advising/)

#### Writing Centre

*Help with academic writing: how to write essays, create outlines, argue logically, integrate quotes and develop a thesis*

250-370-3491

[camosun.ca/services/writing-centre/](http://camosun.ca/services/writing-centre/)

#### Help Centres

*One-on-one tutoring, tips and tools for all levels of English and math coursework.*

[camosun.ca/services/help-centres/](http://camosun.ca/services/help-centres/)



LEARNING SKILLS

# Procrastination



# Procrastination

## Why do you procrastinate?

There are a number of reasons that people procrastinate, and it is important to spend a bit of time thinking about why you procrastinate. After all, if you don't know why you are procrastinating, you're not as likely to be able to stop doing so.

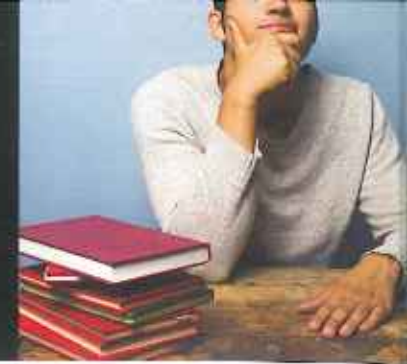
Perhaps one or more of the following sound familiar to you:

- Feeling overwhelmed by the amount of work so that it is difficult to start.
- Not having a clear idea of how long a task will take.
- Not having a clear picture of the tasks that need to be done.
- Not feeling interested in an activity or task.
- Not being excited about the path that you are on.
- Trying to meet someone else's expectations.
- Fearing failure. We sometimes procrastinate as a way to have an excuse for failure. If we don't put much effort into something, we can say that failure is because of the lack of effort rather than because we couldn't succeed.
- Fearing success. We sometimes procrastinate in order to self-sabotage so that we don't have to meet the increased demands that come with success—getting a job, having to take on responsibilities, living up to expectations.
- Thinking that we don't have the skills for the job—or sometimes actually not having them.
- Being a perfectionist. Some people avoid tasks if they don't feel that they can do them perfectly. Or they endlessly redraft and attempt to perfect something—a form of procrastination.

Regardless of the original reason, procrastination can become a habit. If so, you need to replace it with more positive—and less stressful—habits.

# Why not procrastinate?

In some cases, putting off a task makes sense. For example, if you wait, you may have more information about the task or about whether it is necessary to do the task. In that case, you are being strategic in waiting to do the task. Just be certain that you are being strategic and not procrastinating!



## Overcoming procrastination

The strategy that you use is going to depend somewhat on the reason for your procrastination. For example, if you don't have a clear picture of the tasks to be done, you need to get organized. But here are some strategies for you to consider. Above all, don't just read these. Actually do at least one of the following:

### 1. Develop the habit of proactivity.

What is "proactivity"? We typically associate this with taking charge or being energetic, but what causes a person to take charge or be energetic? Well, one approach that people often take—the opposite of proactivity—is to assume that when something happens to us, we have no choice in our response. With that thinking, we have no choice but to be angry when someone is rude to us, or we have no choice but to be late with an assignment because a friend came to visit the night before it was due. And so on. But we almost always have the freedom to choose our response, even to the extent of choosing how we feel. So ... one way to think of proactivity is recognizing that **you have the freedom to choose**. And this includes choosing whether you are going to get something done or whether you are going to procrastinate.

You might then ask, "how do I develop the habit of proactivity?" A very good way is to make a promise to yourself and keep it. Make the promise small enough so that you won't let yourself down. For example, promise yourself that you will work for one hour or a half hour on your essay this evening. Keep the promise and then do it again until you get into the habit of keeping promises to yourself.

### 2. Ensure that you are on a path that excites you.

You should try as much as possible to be aware of why you are pursuing the path that you are on. What caused you to choose this path in the first place? Are you looking forward to helping people, to travelling, to using your best skills, to doing something that helps the world in some way? Are you looking forward to the lifestyle that this career will bring? Find out as much as you can about the possibilities that your studies are leading to!

### 3. Provide rewards for finishing a task.

It doesn't have to be a big reward, though those have their place too. It could be that you tell yourself that you will watch your favorite show after you complete an essay or that you meet friends only when you complete reading a chapter. It can even be as simple as noticing that you've done something and giving yourself a pat on the back.

### 4. Break up tasks into smaller chunks.

It is far more common to procrastinate on larger tasks than smaller ones. We put off writing an essay more than we would answering a set of assigned questions. So, it is a good idea to think of a large task as being made up of smaller ones. When starting to write an essay, don't think of yourself as sitting down to write the entire essay. Instead, you might set out to "brainstorm ideas" or "write an outline." Once you are done that, you are free to start on the next step if you choose. After all, cleaning a pile of dirty dishes can start with one fork.