

Overcoming Procrastination

Procrastination interferes with the academic and personal success of students. In order to overcome procrastination, you must first understand why you might be avoiding tasks which need to be accomplished.

FEAR AND ANXIETY

- Fear of failure - you may be afraid that if you put effort into the assignment and fail, that is worse than not putting in much effort and failing.
 - You may feel as though you never experience “real” failure because you use procrastination as an excuse.
- **TO OVERCOME THIS:**
 - Evaluate your definition of “failure” - do you think that not receiving an ‘A’ is failing? Do you believe that failing a test means you, as a person, are a failure?
 - These are unrealistic expectations for yourself.
 - Set realistic goals - be specific, reward yourself for studying as well as for passing the exam, set goals YOU want to achieve - make sure you are making decisions that are right for you (not your family, friends, significant other etc.)
 - Remember a poor grade is only a minor setback, it does not permanently affect the outcome of your life.

POOR TIME MANAGEMENT

- Do you always put academics on the backburner?
- Do you always put your social life first?
- Did you spend the last 2 hours (when you should have been studying) on Pinterest, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and/or Twitter?
 - These are all signs of poor time management.
 - Most people do not learn best or produce their best work under pressure. College work can require you to review a topic or correct a paper multiple times.
- **TO OVERCOME THIS:**
 - Set priorities - write them down in order of most important to least important.
 - Create your own study or reading schedule to manage larger tasks.
 - Reward yourself - schedule ‘fun’ time for after your work time.
 - Study in small blocks, instead of long time periods.

LACK OF INTEREST

- All students (and adults!) are required to do things that they don’t LOVE to do from time to time, but not everyone procrastinates.
- **TO OVERCOME THIS:**
 - Just do it! If you accomplish the task it doesn’t mean you will necessarily enjoy it - but it does allow you to have more time to do things you enjoy without the guilt of putting off something you dislike.
 - You can’t escape general education classes - but don’t view them as a waste of time. Use them as an opportunity to study or learn something new and exciting - you may enjoy it if you let yourself!
 - Do you find your major classes boring? You shouldn’t!
 - If you do, consider if what you are doing now is something you want to do for the rest of your life. If not - make an appointment with your advisor and discuss changing your major.

SKILL DEFICITS

- Many students procrastinate because they may lack a skill which is essential to the completion of a task.
 - You may be a slow reader and have multiple chapters to read before class so instead of seeking help, it is easier to procrastinate.
- **TO OVERCOME THIS:**
 - Identify the problem.
 - Write down your personal goals, strengths, and weaknesses.
 - If necessary, consult a counselor, instructor, or visit the LRC for help determining the problem. After the problem is identified, it is easier to make steps toward correcting it.

DIFFICULTY CONCENTRATING

- Is your desk cluttered?
- Do you find yourself constantly daydreaming when you should be working?
- Do you find yourself getting up from your seat constantly to eat, drink, text, etc.?
 - These are all signs of ineffective concentration which can lead to procrastination and frustration.
- **TO OVERCOME THIS:**
 - Only study in groups if the group is fully concentrated on actively studying.
 - Take a break, but be careful that you do not get TOO distracted and forget to return to your work.
 - Modify your environment:
 - Eliminate or minimize noise and other distractions
 - Ensure adequate lighting and have necessary equipment on hand.
 - Be neat! Take some time to straighten up your desk, this can help reduce daydreaming.

PERSONAL PROBLEMS

- Financial burdens and relationship troubles can occupy your mind and time so much, you may forget about assignments and study schedules.
- **TO OVERCOME THIS:**
 - If your personal problems begin to hinder your studies, consider making an appointment in the CUW Counseling Center.

****To make an appointment with the CUW Counseling Center contact Dave Enters (262-243-4211, AL 111) or Anne Spahr (262-243-4456, AL 111). This service is FREE to CUW students.**