

SEVEN DAY PROCRASTINATION PLAN

These are 7 strategies you can use to eliminate procrastination. The suggestions are tied to the days of the week to help you recall.

On Monday: Make it Meaningful.

Why is that job important? If you have been putting off something, take a minute to list all the benefits of completing the task. Look at the job in the perspective of your goals. Write down the task you have been avoiding, then, below it, write your reason for doing it. Relate the task to your goals, and be specific about the payoffs and rewards.

On Tuesday: Take it apart.

Break big jobs into small, manageable parts. Then be determined to complete one of those tasks. Make each task something you can accomplish in 15 minutes or less. Make the results measurable so you can see your progress. If a long reading assignment intimidates you, break it into two- or three-page sections; list the sections, then cross off each section as you complete it. Give yourself a visual experience of getting something done.

On Wednesday: Write an intention statement.

Use an intention statement in conjunction with a small task you have created. Write your statement on 3X5 card, and carry it with you or post it in your study area where you can see it often.

For example, if you have a term paper to write and can't seem to get started, write yourself an intention statement that says, "I intend to write a list of at least ten possible topics for my term paper by 9 pm. I will reward myself with an hour of guilt-free recreational reading."

On Thursday: Tell everyone.

Announce your intention publicly. Tell a friend. Tell your spouse, roommate, parents, or children. Telling the world of your intention is an excellent technique to ensure its completion. Make the world your support group.

On Friday: Find a reward.

Rewards can be difficult to construct. A reward must be something that you would genuinely withhold from yourself if you did not earn it. Don't pick a movie as a reward if you plan to go to anyway. If you don't complete what

you set out to do, and go to the movie anyway, the movie would be an ineffective reward. When you legitimately reap your reward, notice how it feels. You may find that movies, clothes, or an extra hour studying one of your favorite subjects are more enjoyable when you feel like you've earned it.

On Saturday: Settle it, now.

Do it now. The minute you notice yourself procrastinating, plunge into the task. Imagine yourself at a mountain lake, poised to dive. Gradual immersion would be slow torture. It's often less painful to leap.

Then be sure to savor the feeling of having the task behind you.

On Sunday: Say no.

When you notice yourself continually pushing a task into the low-priority category, re-examine the purpose for doing it at all. If you realize that you really don't intend to do something, quit telling yourself that you will. That's procrastinating. Tell the truth and drop it. Then you're not procrastinating, and you don't have to carry around the baggage of an undone task.

Adapted from: *Becoming a Master Student*, by David Ellis. (College Survival, Inc. 1984)