

CAUSES OF PROCRASTINATION

Procrastination is a bad habit, and, like overspending or fidgeting, it can be difficult to stop. Figuring out why you are procrastinating can give you insight on how to stop it. As you read the causes for procrastination, mark whether they describe you or not.

Cause	Description	This does not describe me.	This somewhat describes me.	This definitely describes me.
Self-Deception	This is the tendency to rationalize your unwillingness to start unpleasant tasks. The following statements are often heard when you are deceiving yourself: "I can always do it later"; "I work best under pressure"; "I like to do things all at once and get them over with"; "Getting started early doesn't help."			
Perfectionism	Procrastinators often put unrealistic demands on themselves to be perfect. For example, think how often you have started exercising or dieting only to give up after the first day when you did not lose 10 pounds. A different type of perfectionist believes that excellence should come with little or no effort. For instance, when it becomes obvious that not all college classes will be joyful experiences or that you will struggle in some subjects, you get discouraged and stop handing in assignments.			
A Fear of Failure	This can lead to an "all or nothing" attitude in which you sabotage your work and secretly think, "The teacher may give my paper a bad grade, but this isn't really my usual work. After all, I only had 20 minutes to do it." By waiting until the last minute, you might give yourself an excuse in case you don't make that "A."			
A Fear of Success	Yes, this may be difficult to imagine, but a fear of doing too well may motivate you to postpone studying for an exam or writing a business report. If you really did well, your boss, professor, friends, or parents might expect you to continue doing well, allowing little room for mistakes.			

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Inappropriate Commitments	In this situation, you put all your energy and time into fraternity life or athletics and let your academic work slide. In addition, you can't say no when your friends ask you to hang out. This is an example of a failure to establish priorities.			
Rebellion	If you feel you are being controlled or dominated by following schedules, deadlines, or rules set by someone else, you may be procrastinating in order to say, "I refuse to give in to you and let you tell me what to do!"			
Revenge	If you perceive your boss or professor as inconsiderate because she has given you too much work to do in too little time, you may want to get back by not turning in the work on time.			
A Feeling of Being Overwhelmed	Jobs that seem too big influence procrastination. Rather than take a major research paper step-by-step, the procrastinator "awfulizes" about how terrible it is that students are required to do so much work. Instead of using small bits of time to get started, the procrastinator becomes paralyzed by the thought of how much time the research paper will take.			

Review the table and determine the top causes for your procrastination. Use these causes to catch yourself when you start falling into the procrastination trap! For more information, check out more tips in the handouts on the SLAC website, and try to personalize them depending on your cause(s) of procrastination.