

## Quick Guide: Overcoming Procrastination

Many people have a tendency to procrastinate. This could be because the task is complicated, you're unfamiliar with it, there's a prospect of conflict or you simply prefer to socialise rather than work! But motivating yourself to "do" rather than "avoid" some tasks will result in higher levels of achievement, satisfaction and increased self belief and self esteem. So here are the **top ten tips** to help you do that:

1. **Each task expands to the time allotted to it**, so set a limit for yourself: "I'll make all my phone calls in one hour"; "I'll file for 30 minutes"; "I'll spend an hour on this report". Set a timer. You'll be amazed how much you can get done (and enjoy it!) when you focus your time.
2. **Do unpleasant tasks first**. Your sense of achievement will put you in a positive frame of mind and you will be more motivated to do other tasks.
3. **Reward yourself** with tasks you want to do. Alternating unpleasant and pleasant tasks means you are less likely to find yourself drifting off to other things.
4. **Eat that elephant** – one mouthful at a time! Break up large tasks or projects into bite-sized chunks, and schedule these to achieve the final deadline.
5. **If you can't do the task now**, plan it into your diary and stick to it! You can't keep putting it off.
6. **Think about the consequences** of missing a deadline. This will encourage you to start and to complete the task.
7. **If the thought of certain tasks fills you with anxiety** try breathing. Inhale deeply, then exhale, each time counting five heart beats. You should notice after each breath that your heart rate is slowing and you feel less tense. Now do something – no matter how small – just make a start. The very act of doing something will ease your anxiety.
8. **If you have to handle a tricky situation** that may cause conflict, plan what you are going to say, think about what their reaction may be and how you will handle this, and then just do it. The longer you leave it the worse it could become.
9. **Don't panic** if you're behind schedule – get creative! Request time extensions; get help from colleagues and managers; delegate tasks; re-prioritise tasks.
10. **There is no situation that can't be solved**, once you let your expectations change about how it should be. So don't sit there worrying about it, just do it!

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