

Now is the Time to Fight Procrastination

What is Procrastination?

Procrastination has affected all of us at one time or another over the course of our lives. Technically, procrastination means to put something off until later, to postpone or defer action on something one has decided to do. This is generally manifested by doing low-priority tasks instead of those that are high-priority, as well as occupying ourselves with "trivia" so we stay busy and thus have a good excuse for not doing what we know deep-down we should be doing.

Why Do We Procrastinate?

I'm sure we can agree that we have all procrastinated, but do we really understand *why* we did it? Probably not! There are many reasons why procrastination occurs, but these are the most common:

- **Lack of Self-Confidence**
- **Perfectionism**
- **Low Frustration Tolerance** - *a desire for immediate gratification or a belief that one needs an outside source to motivate him/her to action.*
- **Hostility** - *a means of rebellion when one feels that life isn't giving him what he believes he deserves*
- **Not Ready / Unsure How To Start**
- **Feeling Overwhelmed** - *too much on one's plate; don't know what to do **first!***
- **Disliking the Task** - *putting off those tasks associated with pain rather than pleasure.*

Costs of Procrastination:

While the most obvious cost of procrastination is wasted or lost time, there are other more serious consequences to consider. In addition to lost time, a great deal of energy is wasted by putting off those items which we feel are necessary or critical. It takes a lot of energy to worry about that which needs to be done. Procrastination is also stressful and draining and can lead to feelings of guilt, inadequacy, self-disgust, and depression.

Tips to Overcome Procrastination:

Procrastination is something that should be avoided, but how do we do it? Here are a few strategies to help you get on the right track:

- **Do It Now:** When you plan your day, ask yourself what action item you are *most* resisting. Commit to doing that task first!
- **Simple Items First:** If you find yourself procrastinating on doing *anything*, you can get unstuck by doing the *easiest* tasks first. You'll experience less stress and, as you complete activities, you'll experience a sense of mastery.
- **Manageable "Chunks":** Break down large, overwhelming tasks into smaller steps. Keep breaking each task down until you get to an action step which doesn't provoke anxiety.
- **Build In Rewards:** Tell yourself that after you complete a task you've been putting off, you can do something fun. Then you'll have something to look forward to which will propel you to break through resistance and get it done!

Remember. Never put off for tomorrow what you can do today!