

# Types of Procrastination (And How To Fix Procrastination And Start Doing)

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We are all guilty of procrastinating from time to time—there's *always* something more interesting than the work in hand. We usually think it's no big deal since deadline is our biggest inspiration, and we do our best work when we're inspired. We may even joke about it.

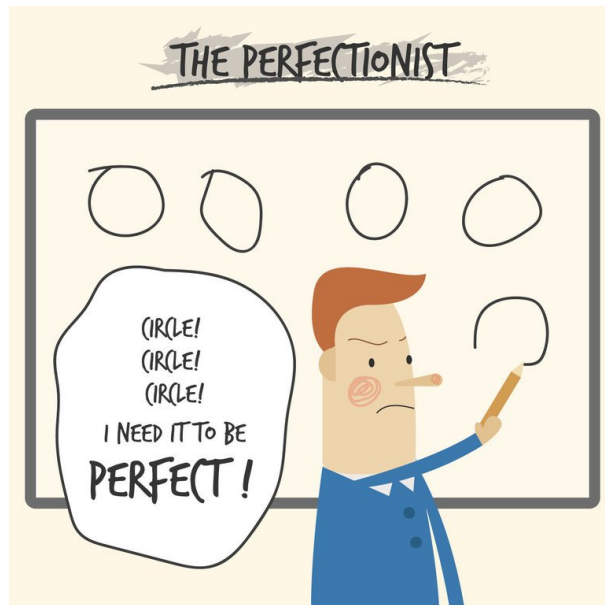
However, procrastination is a massive waste of time as it turns out. A survey in 2015 found that **on average, a person loses over 55 days per year procrastinating**, wasting around 218 minutes every day on doing unimportant things.

[1] Here's the maths:  $218 \text{ minutes/day} \times 365 = 79570 \text{ minutes} = 55.3 \text{ days}$

That's a lot of time wasted!

We must fight procrastination to its core. And we can do this if we become more aware of ourselves and this bad habit called procrastination. Only then can we succeed to crush it and reach our goals.

## 5 Types of procrastination (and how to fix them)



There're mainly 5 common reasons why people procrastinate. To help you identify the reason why you put things off easily, here're 5 types of procrastination. Let's see which one you find yourself more relatable to:

### Type 1: The Perfectionist

They are the ones who pay too much attention to the minor details. The perfectionist is afraid to start a task because they get stressed out about getting every detail right. They can also get stuck in the process even when they've started since they're just too scared to move on.

## Advice for the Perfectionist:

Instead of letting your obsession with details take up all your time, be clear about the purpose of your tasks and assign a time limit to each task. This will force you to stay focused and finish your task within the time frame.

For example:

If you're going to write a report, be clear about the purpose of the report first.

If the goal of having the report is to clearly present the changes in data over the past few months, don't sweat too much about writing up a lot of dainty words; rather, focus more on the figures and charts. Just make sure the goal can be reached, and there's really no need to work on things that don't help you achieve the ultimate goal.

## Type 2: The Dreamer

This is someone who enjoys making the ideal plan more than taking actions. They are highly creative, but find it hard to actually finish a task.

### Advice for the Dreamer

To stop yourself from being carried away by your endless imagination, get your feet back on the ground by setting specific (and achievable) goals for each day based on the SMART framework (See article entitled *"How to Use SMART Goal to Become Highly Successful in Life"* by Carl Pullein). Set a goal and break down the plan into small tasks that you can take actions right away.



For example:

If you dream about waking up earlier every day, set a clear goal about it – “In 3 weeks, I will wake up at 6:30 am every day.”

Then, break this goal down into smaller tasks:

- From tonight onwards, I will go to sleep before 11:00pm.
  - Set alarm to remind me to go to sleep
  - Schedule earlier friends gathering so I can go to sleep early

- For the 1st week, I will wake up at 7:30am even for non-working days
  - Go jogging or swimming in the morning for weekends
  -

... and the task list goes on.

Also, you should reflect on your progress while you work. Track your input and output for each task, so you can easily tell which tasks are only a waste of time with little importance. This can help you focus on doing the things that bring positive results, which will improve productivity.

### Type 3: The Avoider

The worriers are scared to take on tasks that they think they can't manage. They would rather put off work than be judged by others when they end up making mistakes.

#### Advice for the Avoider

I know checking emails seems tempting, but don't make answering emails the first thing on your to-do list. More often than not, emails are unimportant. But they steal your time and mental energy before you even notice.



Instead, focus on the worst first. Spend your morning working on what you find the most challenging. This will give you a sense of achievement, and helps you build momentum for a productive day ahead.

Try to break down your tasks into smaller sub-tasks. Understand how much time and energy is really needed for a given task. Make realistic calculations.

For example:

A 2000-word report does seem to take a lot of time and effort; it does seem scary to just start working on it. But is there anyway to break this down into smaller pieces so it'll seem less scary? What about this:

- Introduction: around 100 words (15 min)
- Table of contents (5 min)
- Report on the financial status: a chart with 100 supporting text (20 min)

- Case study: 3 cases based on the new business model with around 400 words each (around 40 min each)
- Conclusion: around 800 words (30 min)

Does it look a lot more easier now?

#### **Type 4: The Crisis-maker**

Now the crisis-maker deliberately pushes back work until the last minute. They find deadlines (the crises) exciting, and believe that they work best when being forced to rush it.

#### **Advice for the Crisis-maker**

Being forced to rush the work will perform better is just an illusion because it actually leaves you no room for reviewing the work to make it better afterwards.

If you always leave work until the last minute, try using the Pomodoro technique. Literally the 'tomato technique' developed by Italian entrepreneur Francesco Cirillo.

It focuses on working in short, intensely focused bursts, and then giving yourself a brief break to recover and start over.

For example:

Use a timer and divide your complex work into small manageable sessions. In between the small sessions, give yourself a break to recover.

While giving your brain a regular break can highly boost your performance by recharging your brain's energy; having completed the tasks earlier allows you to have plenty of time to go through your work again to make it even better.

#### **Type 5: The Busy Procrastinator**

This type of procrastinators are the fussy ones. They have trouble prioritizing tasks because they either have too many of them or refuse to work on what they see as unworthy of their effort. They don't know how to choose the task that's best for them and simply postpone making any decisions.[9]



## Advice for the Busy Procrastinator

You have to get your priorities straight. Important tasks should take priority over urgent ones because 'urgent' doesn't always mean important. You only have so much time and energy, and you don't want to waste that on things that don't matter.

Identify the purpose of your task and the expected outcome. Important tasks are the ones that add value in the long run.

Replying an email that's written "please get back to me asap" seems to be urgent, but before you reply that email, think about how important it is compared to other tasks.

For example:

Imagine the email is sent by a client asking about the progress of a project and she wants you to reply her as soon as possible; at the same time you have another task about fixing the logistics problem that is affecting all the projects on hand. Which one should you handle first?

The time cost for replying an email is as low as just around 5 minutes but the benefit is also very low because you're just satisfying one client request. Fixing the logistic problem probably takes a lot more time but it's also a lot more worth it because by fixing the problem, you're saving all the projects on hands, benefiting the whole company.

## Beat procrastination now!

You may notice most of the characteristics of procrastinators have to do with their mindset. People keep delaying work because of fear. This is exactly why tweaking our attitude towards work can help us stop procrastinating.

Changing your mindset may seem a lot of work. But by doing the smallest things every day, you're getting used to the way you handle works — from setting goals, to breaking down tasks, to evaluating each task's values.

There is no tomorrow when it comes to this particular habit. You just have to beat it now!

