

THE ANTI-PROCRASTINATION GUIDE

Move from 'Delay' to 'Doing'

1. Understand why you are procrastinating

What is the root cause of your procrastination?

- Emotional avoidance, have a fear of failure or desire for perfectionism
- Task aversion as you feel it may be boring or challenging or you are unclear about what you need to do
- Overwhelmed by too many choices or too long a list or not enough structure about how to do it
- Low energy or low motivation due to a lack of sleep or lack of hydration or nutrition or low mood
- Lack of self worth to do the task or make the change or build the new habit or believe that you deserve success
- Self limiting beliefs, that you believe you can't achieve it or that you are not the type of person who enjoys doing something or succeeds in a particular arena

2. Reframe the task to reduce your mental resistance

Your brain resists what it sees as the threat of hard, unending, or pointless work. Reframe it to reduce your resistance.

- "It's too much" -> "I'll just do 5 minutes"
- "It has to be perfect" -> "Version 1 can be imperfect"
- "I don't know where to start" -> "I'll write a list and pick the top priority"



3. Use strategies that have been proven

3.1. The Two Minute Rule

Start with something that takes less than 2 minutes. Start fast with a lower resistance. Once in motion, it's easier to keep going. You can then build momentum and lower your emotional resistance to a task

3.2. Time Blocking

- Schedule the task into your calendar to create structure and don't rely on your memory.
- Pomodoro Technique - Use a timer or alarm to time a 25-minute period for a focused sprint / period of intense focus. Make sure you have a short rest after your time of focus and then as you have done it once, you can do it again. You have proven to yourself it was easier than you thought.

4. Define your intention

Decide your action, write it down simply so you have told yourself what you expect and when.

- At 9 a.m. I will open my laptop and spend 15 minutes writing my plan
- I will drink one bottle of water before lunch
- I will do 10 minutes of stretching before bed

5. Have accountability

- Tell someone (not everyone you know) to increase accountability
- Employ a professional to help you with accountability
- Have a checklist and review your progress each week to be accountable to yourself



6. Have an environment that enables you

Your environment should make starting easier and distractions harder.

- Visual cues - Lay out tools/materials the night before
- Limit distractions - Use apps to limit screen time, or use a locked 'safe' to store your devices in for a certain time period. Remove other tasks or interests to another room such as book you are reading or a craft project you are in the middle of. Remove things that will tempt you, don't try to rely on your self control, rather remove the distraction / the items you want to avoid
- Dedicated space - depending on your task, choose a space associated only with focus, such a study zone in your home or a silent area in a library. Have a specific place to store equipment you need so it is easily accessible
- Digital minimalism - When working on a computer to have minimal tabs / applications open. Pause notifications. Turn off the TV in the background

6. Optimise your brain

Boost your energy and brain power!

- Hydrate! Start as soon as you wake up, aim for one and half to two litres of water a day, every day. But avoid drinking loads just before bed as you don't want to interrupt your sleep
- Get sunlight first thing in the morning to regulate your circadian rhythm
- Get the sleep your body needs
- Have movement breaks to re-activate brain, this can be just two to five minutes of movement
- Fuel yourself with nutritious meals, with lots of protein, some good fats and complex carbs for slow release, fibre to support your gut microbiome and reduce blood sugar spikes
- Calm your nervous system
- If you're feeling anxious or overwhelmed: Try box breathing: 4 seconds breath in, 4 seconds breath hold, 4 seconds breath out, 4 seconds breath hold
- Simply diaphragmatic breathing will stimulate your vagus nerve and activate the parasympathetic nervous system, telling your body it is safe to relax
- Take a quick walk or stretch to regulate your nervous system and change your focus



7. Schedule in rewards and reflection

7.1. Reward your small wins

- Track your progress visibly, (using checklist or plans) to generate a sense of achievement
- Give yourself small rewards and create a plan showing when you earn a reward

7.2. Reflect weekly to build your self awareness

Progress isn't about achieving perfection or reaching your goals overnight, rather it is about moving forward gradually and becoming a more consistent in your efforts to build habits and bring about change.

- What triggered procrastination?
- What strategy worked to overcome it?
- What will I try differently next time?