

Anti-procrastination strategies:

Procrastination is just a habit

1. Change your attitude:

“I used to be able to do everything to my best, all the time.”

NOW: No one can do it all to 100%, all the time. Make wise choices.

2. Change your usual habits:

- Set priorities and be strategic.
- Balance “*what’s important?*” with “*what’s hard?*” Do some of both, each day.
- Decide if in *these* circumstances, something must be done less well than your best.

3. Get started with the “5 More Rule”

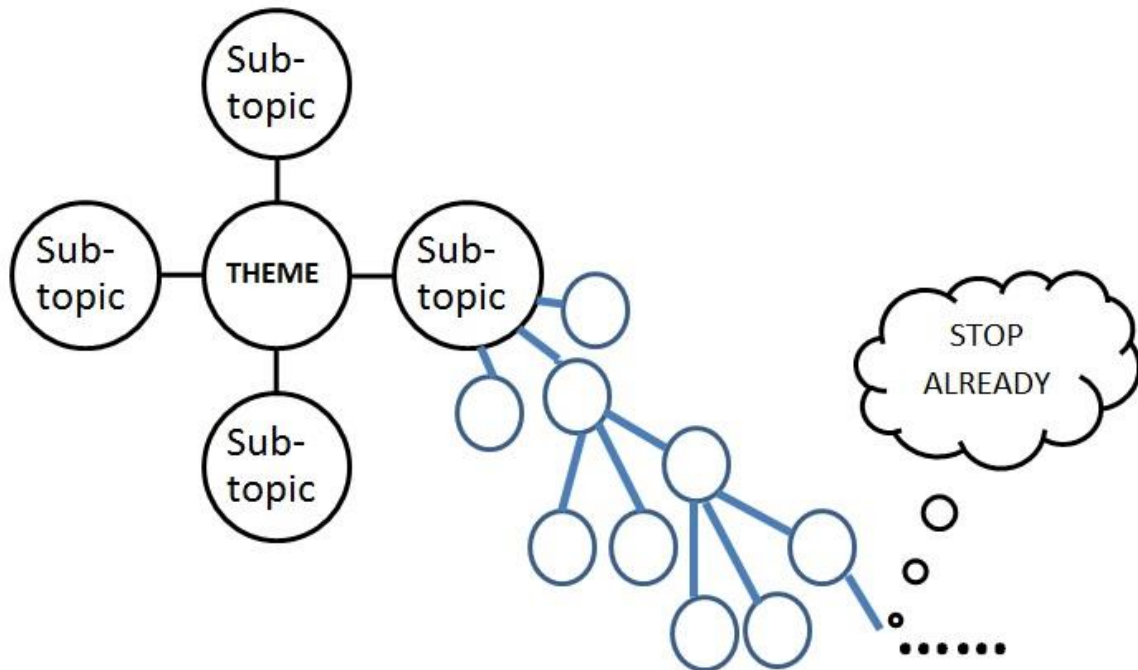
- i. Set a modest target, e.g. 5 sentences to write, or 5 pages to read, or 5 problems to do, or 5 minutes of work, or 5 dishes to wash, or 5 more crunches
- ii. **✓** Just Do it. It is so modest, of course you can do it!
- iii. Stop. Congratulate yourself for reaching your target.
- iv. Re-consider. Will you do 5 More? Pack up and go home?
- v. As you get over the “hump” of starting, and begin to settle into your work period, you may decide to increase what you are asking of yourself, e.g. 45 minutes of work? 10 pages of reading? etc.

4. Keep Going: Improve focus and concentration

- Unplug (seriously!)
- Do “hard” things first, early in the day and at the beginning of the week.
- Use the “best” location & time of day for you.
- Work ~50 minutes, 10 min. break, for up to 3 hours. Take a ~1 hour break, then repeat.
- Use a “Distraction Pad” while working:
 - Briefly record distracting thoughts
 - Get back to work
 - Review Distraction Pad once daily, and sort into categories of topics (e.g. too late &/or not important; need to do; personal concern that could be addressed; great thought coming at the wrong moment—like an insight into some perplexing statistical matter for a lab—that should be noted for future reference.
- Act as needed

5. Know when to stop

- Does it have to be **perfect**? Is “good enough” acceptable or practical?
- In writing papers, it is sufficient to write “the latest” word on the current understanding of a topic, rather than aiming to write the definitive or “last word” in an area.
- Use a mind-map to summarize material and see if you are lost in details (researching, studying or writing). What’s important? What can be used another time (maybe!)?



6. Commit to something

- Set goals
- Make a plan
- Be accountable to yourself (keep track of accomplishments) or to someone else