

Motivation and procrastination

Motivation

Definition: stimulate interest in; cause to act in a particular way

Myth: “Motivation will magically appear and then I’ll feel like doing it.”

Reality: Action builds the desire to do more.

Procrastination

Definition: to defer action, due to intentional choice or difficulty in starting.

Myth: “I work better under pressure”

Reality: They *only* work under pressure, and it increases their stress level.

Ten tips to combat procrastination

1. Set realistic goals: break large projects into smaller steps.
2. Think about how the current activity fits in with your long-term plan, to help prioritize. Visit Career Services if your courses and goals really don’t align.
3. Engage: Act as if the topic or activity interests you. Discuss 1 idea after class with a friend. Put equal time and effort into activities of similar priority
4. Evaluate the costs of doing or avoiding something. Make a choice, and accept the consequence.
5. Create a Weekly Schedule or To Do list that includes time for exercise, social activity, and relaxation after you’ve worked. Or use a daily List of Accomplishments to record your positive activity.
6. To “kick start” work, use the “5 More Rule”. Commit to 5 minutes, or 5 pages of reading, or 5 sentences to write; just do it; ask yourself “5 more? Stop now?”
7. Hang out, or form study groups, with motivated and engaged students.
8. Turn up the pressure by setting several small deadlines to finish before the due date.
9. Watch for the “downward spiral” of falling behind, missing class, getting discouraged. Talk to your professor, TA, learning strategist, or friend for help.