

## **Advice: Tips for Procrastinators**

### 1. Don't say "I must", or "I have to", or "I should".

People get stuck between their inner voices and use ineffective ways of motivation. One voice says, "I should", while another says "I don't want to." Instead, recognize that you have a choice. Realizing that you have chosen your goals helps shut down the conflict between "should" and "want". Sure, you don't have to study for the exam, but choosing not to could seriously damage your plan to pass the class.

### 2. Set realistic goals.

Resolutions like "I want to get an A" often fail, but plans like "I will do my homework each weeknight at 7 PM" are more achievable. Break tasks down into small, specific, manageable steps.

### 3. Schedule time off.

A researcher who studied procrastination found that graduate students who completed dissertations in two years or less allowed themselves time for relaxation. Those who took three or more years tried to spend every minute researching and writing. They rebelled against the self-imposed drudgery, rendering themselves less effective in the long term.

### 4. Fight misguided impulses.

Don't succumb to myths such as "pressure improves performance." Working under pressure is better than doing no work at all, but work done under pressure is not your best work. Set up a schedule that includes short- medium- and long-term goals to avoid leaving everything until the last minute.

### 5. Be selective.

If you tend toward perfectionism, only do your absolute best when it matters. Every page of your class notes needn't be exquisitely written; a exam question, however, should be.

### 6. Know that you are a valuable person.

The more you cultivate a sense of self-worth in areas outside the procrastination-prone domain (usually work or school), the less likely you will be to postpone tasks. Remember, no judgment of your work is ever the final verdict on you.

-Taken from Psychology Today, July/August 2003