



**#1  
Bestseller**

**2<sup>nd</sup>  
Edition**

# Procrastination

# Cure

12 surefire ways to save your sanity and get things done today

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Cut these questions out, clip them to your calendar and read them as you make your to do list.

### Your 5 questions:

1. Do I know **who** will do it?
2. Do I have **what** I need?
3. Do I know **how** to do it?
4. Do I know **when** I'll start?
5. Do I know **why** I'm doing it?

Bonus question: is it **bite size**?

## Put an end to procrastination, for good!

Quick, make a mental list of five things you are currently putting off. How does that make you feel? Anxious? Tired? Overwhelmed?

Now think about checking just one of those off items your list. How do you feel? Calm? Energized? Accomplished?

So if we know we'll feel better when we take action why don't we?

## Are you procrastinating or percolating?

I'm going to let you in on a little secret: you might not be procrastinating (or at least not nearly as much as you think) you might be percolating. Just like a pot of coffee needs time to brew you might need time to get around to it.

Here's how to tell the difference: if you can answer 'yes' to these five questions then you are procrastinating. But if you answer 'no' to any one of the questions then you are still percolating.



## Take action, today!

Do you know **who** will do it? Most times it is just you, but sometimes you need help. Those helpers need to be ready when you are.

Do you have **what** you need? It would be nearly impossible to start packing moving boxes if you didn't have a box to pack into, right?

Do you know **how** to do it? Sure you may have "change wiper blade" on your list but if you don't know how to snap out the old one you're out of luck.

Do you know **when** you'll do it? When you have a specific time to get something done you are much more likely to make it happen.

Do you know **why** you are doing it? Once you know the benefit taking action becomes a lot easier. The benefit could just be feeling better.

Is the task **bite size**? Say you have plan birthday party on your list. That is an overwhelming task. Make a list of attendees is a doable bite size portion.

## 1. Make or Fake a Deadline!

Remember back when a book report was due you got it done, no matter what? Even if you were up until midnight you handed in a paper.

Why? Because you had a deadline!

Have you ever noticed how most of the tasks we put off are tasks *without* deadlines? Does it really matter if you stain the deck this week or next week? Not really...unless you're hosting a BBQ.

Then that deck will be stained! Even if you are out there the night before the BBQ, right? So fake a deadline if you have to, but deadlines get things done!

## 2. Act Like You're on a Game Show!

Set a timer for 18 minutes and challenge yourself to get some or the entire task done before the buzzer goes off.

Having a timer ticking down in the background keeps you on track and focused on the task.

Plus it makes it fun, sort of like you are on a game show. You'll be energized to just get one more task completed before the time is up.

Sure it might sound odd, but try it, it works!

## 3. Tell Someone!

Choose someone supportive whom you respect and tell her what you plan to accomplish. You can even ask that person if she would be willing to follow-up with you.

Knowing someone is waiting on you to do what you said you were going to do means we are much more likely to take action.

Accountability works, after all you don't want to disappoint her.

Note: telling a spouse is *not* always the best choice. Sometimes your spouse is a little too close to the situation and knows you a little too well.

## 4. Set Out a Piece of Cheese!

We know mice work through a maze for the reward on the other end. They take the time and expend the energy to get the good stuff, the cheese.

So it stands to reason that if you were to set out a reward for yourself on the other end of the task then you'll be more excited about tackling the task.

What works best is holding off on something you'd normally enjoy, like a cup of coffee from your favorite café, sure you'd do it anyway, just do it *after* the task.

The opposite can work equally as well. Set up a penalty for a job that doesn't get done, like maybe a \$5.00 fine paid to your best friend.

## 5. List Pros and Cons!

Have you ever drawn a line down the center of a piece of paper to make a list of pros and cons to help you make a difficult decision?

The same idea works when you're trying to get going on a task. Grab a sheet of paper and make a list of pros which are the reasons why taking on the task would be good. Pro= cleaning the garage gets your car inside.

Then list the cons which are all the not so great things that can happen as a result of you not taking action. Con= snow needs to be scraped off.

Seeing the pros and cons in black and white can be all the motivation you need to get started.

## 6. KISS!

You've heard of the idea to Keep It Simple Stupid. Well I'm not a big fan of calling anyone stupid, most especially you, so how about we change it to read Keep It Simple, Seriously! All too often we overcomplicate the task or make it more difficult than it needs to be.

For example you might think you're procrastinating about shredding your to-be shred pile. But when you realize you'd need to dig out the shredder, find the cord, plug it in and probably empty it too, well no wonder why it doesn't get done.

The energy it takes to do the task is spent prepping to do the task, make it easy and keep it simple.

## 7. Eat Your Peas!

Most children report eating peas to be icky, you can think of icky tasks as peas. If you didn't like peas then seeing them on your plate would cause you anxiety. The anticipation of having to eat them would most likely be worse than actually popping them in your mouth and swallowing.

The anticipation of icky tasks is always worse than the task itself. Once you get it done you wonder what all the fuss was about, I should have done this sooner!

So eat your peas and eat your peas early in the day, you'll build your confidence that you can do anything and every task that follows just gets easier.

## 8. Swap It!

Stop and think about who you know that is skilled at or who loves to do what you still have on your list.

Then think of three things you like to do, maybe babysit, bake and run errands. Then ask that person to swap skills with you otherwise known as bartering.

Maybe you have a neighbor who is a natural organizer and she admires what you cook the best chili on the block.

She might just be interested in a pot of your famous chili for an hour of her organizing skills. It never hurts to ask.

## 9. Team Up!

No one can understand putting off a specific task more than someone else who is also putting off a specific task.

When the two of your team up to cheer each other on something really great happens, tasks get checked off both your lists.

Just as you inspire and motivate your team member she'll inspire and motivate you.

Try calling each other and agreeing on a task, like making a doctor's appointment, hang up complete the appointment making and call each other back to share the success. *Go Team!*

## 10. Play Dress Up!

You know how when a little girl plays princess once she puts on that dress she really sees herself in the castle?

Well the same idea can work for you- you can visualize yourself on the other side of the task.

When you act like you're doing it you can see yourself with the project done and then it is just a matter of your actions becoming reality to catch up with the fantasy of the task being completed.

## 11. It is Never Too Late!

It is never too late, really. Is there something on your list that now seems woefully outdated? I'm talking about things like a belated anniversary card or a heartfelt thank you note.

Just think, how would you feel to get a thank you note, even if it was for something you did weeks ago? Would you be more likely to count the days and wonder what took so long? Or would it make your day?

You'd appreciate it no matter when it arrived right? Well the person you are thinking about feels the same way. So stop delaying it any further.

## 12. Just Two Minutes!

It may surprise you to learn just how much you can accomplish in just two minutes, but try it. During a television commercial break you can sort your stack of magazines or catalogs.

While you're waiting for a pot of water to boil you can toss the junk from your kitchen junk drawer. When you have two minutes before the bathtub fills with water you can rearrange your makeup drawer.

As the curling iron heats up you can rearrange the medicine cabinet. These mini tasks are often on our list of things to do but we put off doing them. Now you'll get them done!

## A few closing thoughts.

Here are three more points to help you overcome procrastination, for good!

- ✓ Forget perfect. Wanting to do something “just right” can prevent you from doing anything at all. Just do it well and you can go back to perfect it in your spare time.
- ✓ Make it interesting. Play music or turn it into a game, whatever you can do to make it fun!
- ✓ Make a decision. Too many times we can get caught up in time consuming researching and planning. Lots of times the project could have been done in the time it took you to research it.

## Now it's your turn!

I know you can do this, you can't get it wrong, you just have to get it started!

So the question is this: **what one bite size task will you commit to doing by the end of the day today?**