

GET STARTED: MAKE A PLAN!

1. Firstly, remind yourself of the reasons why you are studying - revisit your hopes, plans, goals and ambitions.
2. Get an overview of what has to be done. This is the "big picture". Be honest with yourself as to what needs doing and by what date.
3. Write down what is in the "big picture" and transfer any deadlines on to a wall planner for easy checking. Put your list of things to do up on the wall so that it is easy to see. You can cross out things as they are completed.
4. Set your priorities. Start on the topic that has the closest deadline or is the most urgent to complete.
5. Break a big task into smaller bits, because smaller tasks are more manageable than the whole thing.
6. Study in small time blocks rather than in huge time chunks i.e. one hour study sessions are more helpful rather than two or three hour blocks.
7. Get started! Write the first sentence or opening paragraph or make a list of issues or headings you want to include in this section of your work. Just get started!
8. Keep reminding yourself that you CAN do this! You've successfully done it before! (rational self talk). You'll do it again! Dwell on success, not failure.
9. Allocate specific periods each day for your study and stick to them. Being flexible with your time is fine but watch out for any avoidance tactics coming from "crooked thinking."
10. Reward yourself when you have completed a task. But don't forget to get back on task until ALL the work is completed!
11. Be realistic and don't aim for perfection. Get down the basic information required to complete the task. You can "fine tune" your work later if there is time.
12. Remember, handing in an adequate piece of completed work is better than missing a deadline and feeling bad about it!

STUDENT COUNSELLING SERVICES
SKILLS – INSIGHT - SUPPORT

WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

If you would like to make an appointment to see a counsellor to learn more about this topic, please contact the counselling service on your campus.

Distance students can contact any one of the campuses. Please tell the receptionist if you need an urgent appointment.

CONTACT DETAILS

ALBANY

Health and Counselling

Hours 8.30am - 5.00pm

Monday - Friday

Phone (09) 443 9783

Email: Studenthealth@massey.ac.nz

MANAWATŪ

Student Counselling Service

Turitea Campus, Palmerston North

Hours 8.30am - 5.00pm

Monday - Friday

Phone (06) 350 5533

Email: s.counselling@massey.ac.nz

WELLINGTON

Student Counselling Service

Hours 8.30am - 5.00pm

Monday - Friday

Phone (04) 801 2542

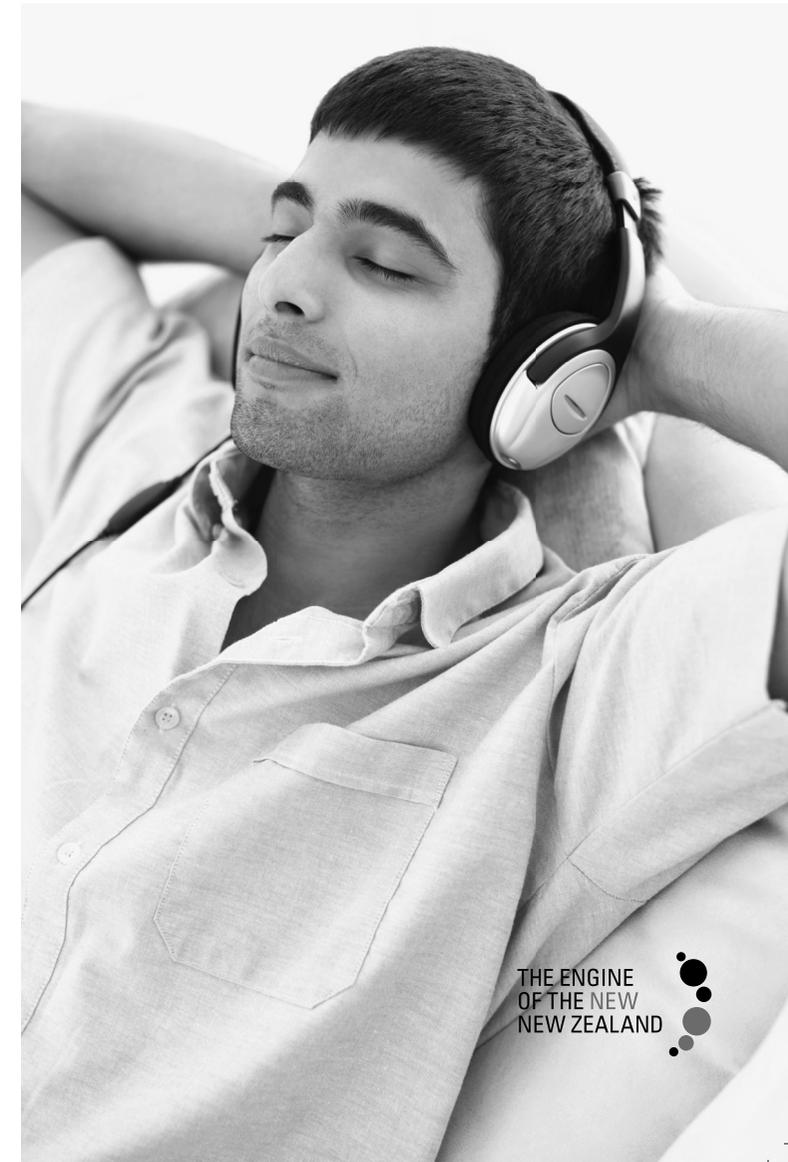
<http://crow.massey.ac.nz>

<http://health-counselling.massey.ac.nz>

0800 MASSEY | MASSEY.AC.NZ

PROCRASTINATION

STUDENT COUNSELLING



PROCRASTINATION

Procrastination is avoiding things which need doing. It is doing other things when we should be on task and working.

THINGS LIKE:

- spending time with our partners
- watching TV
- talking on the phone
- saying its OK to celebrate
- saying "I work better under pressure"
- making excuses for not studying, like "I'm not in the mood"
- saying "I have other things to do first"
- telling yourself there is plenty of time
- tidying your desk when it doesn't need tidying;
- wasting time

These statements get us to postpone important tasks and duties. We all do this at some stage but it can get to a point where procrastination becomes a real problem in our lives.

The more we procrastinate, the bigger the task in front of us becomes and the harder it is to take action.

Failure to act can produce many undesirable feelings:

- Guilt: "If only I had done..."
- Inadequacy: "I can't do it"
- Stress: "There's never enough time"
- Anxiety: "If I fail the paper..."
- Depression: "I'm just not coping..."
- Self doubt: "I'm not sure I'm capable..."

WHY WE PROCRASTINATE

Procrastinators are often accused of being lazy and disorganised. But not getting on with your work is often an indicator of other factors at work, such as:-

- You may be setting yourself too high a standard, and faced with unrealistic goals, you put off doing your work. Thinking that an A pass is what you MUST get and a B or C mark is not good enough.
- You may not see the relevance of your work and so cannot be bothered doing it
- The task may seem boring
- Sometimes you may be unclear about what is required and this leads to avoidance
- Fear of failure, where the task may be new and fear of the unknown can prevent you from making a start
- Personal problems e.g. Problems with your partner, other relationships, financial concerns
- You may feel you don't have the skills to do what is asked and feelings of inadequacy or anxiety prevent you from starting
- Having difficulty concentrating; daydreaming; staring into space; having a distracting environment; having a disorganised work space

Procrastination is a bad habit and like other habits it can be broken. There are two main causes and these are "crooked thinking" and "learned behaviour" patterns.

Crooked thinking is thinking in a way that is neither productive nor helpful and prevents you from tackling the task. Crooked thinking is based on irrational ideas or beliefs which keep you from getting what you want or need.

Learned behaviour is acting in a way that got you what you wanted as a child, but as an adult is not appropriate or helpful to you. i.e. having a temper tantrum or running away from an issue.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

First of all, understand and accept that procrastination is not helpful. It interferes with your academic and personal success and can have painful consequences.

Those old excuses you have been using to avoid starting work just won't hold up under close scrutiny.

Challenge each one as it pops up.

Prepare your study environment. Have everything you need at your finger tips:- books, pens, paper, adequate lighting. Be neat. Minimize noise and distractions.

Take a stand. Commit yourself. Tell a friend, a partner, a supervisor or someone who matters, about your new work plan.

Talk to yourself with positive statements like

- "No time like the present"
- "The sooner I get it done, the sooner I can do what I really want to do
- "I am doing what I have to do, now!"
- "It is less painful if I do it now rather than later"
- "I have done this successfully before, so I can do it again!"

Don't catastrophise. Jumping to conclusions that you are no good at something will only create a wall of fear that will stop you cold.

Recognise that your negative predictions are not fact. Focus on the present and what positive steps you can take towards reaching your goals.

