

Procrastination

As a group, students may be particularly vulnerable to procrastination. They do not have a supervisor overseeing their productivity and there is no pay cheque as a reward for the effort put forth. The rewards for students are further in the future. You have to apply yourself and study for four years before receiving the reward of a degree. With rewards that are not immediate, you may have an increased tendency to procrastinate.

The Cost of Procrastinating

- x Submitting work that reflects cramming
- x Not submitting work and facing the consequences
- x Increased stress levels/decreased self-esteem
- x Increased likelihood of poor academic performance resulting in reduced education and career options

Reasons for Procrastination

1. **Fear of Failure** You may have received some negative feedback in the past or be feeling overwhelmed by a particular course or program. You may feel it is safer to avoid real evaluation of your performance by procrastinating and either avoiding the assignment altogether or setting low goals to protect themselves from really trying and being disappointed if they should fail, but by procrastinating there is an increased likelihood of failure.
2. **Fear of Success** In this example, a really good performance sets up expectations from others about your overall potential. This can be threatening to those who are close to you. Procrastination can be used as a way of ensuring poor academic performance rather than risk losing an important relationship. Fear of success can also contribute to procrastination if a student does not want top marks. After all, once you establish a high standard for yourself, you will have continued pressure to maintain that standard. For some students that seems like a lot of hard work.
3. **Disorganization/Not Enough Information** Sometimes students procrastinate on a project or assignment and do not begin. A task may need to be broken down into its component parts and goals.
4. **Lack of Interest** Students can lose interest in school for many reasons. The course content may not capture your attention, or personal issues may be interfering with your concentration. You may lose momentum and lack the energy to stay involved, perhaps because of poor sleeping or eating habits. Consider setting a tipsheet to help you to assess your short and long term goals if lack of interest is a problem for you.
5. **An Established Pattern** It is not uncommon for students to leave projects until the last minute and then pull it off. However, there is a tendency for such a pattern to become a problem. If academic success is to be attained, it may be time to break the procrastination habit.

Solving the Problem

In attempting to understand the problem of procrastination, you can see the complexity of the issue. The underlying reasons for procrastinating may vary from course to course and a student may exhibit different symptoms at different times. The important thing is that you really want to beat the procrastination habit!

