



Post-Training Support

Eliminate Procrastination

Problem: You don't do something because there's some pain involved in doing it. This is called procrastination. It delays the pain, but in the end the problem doesn't go away. Yet you keep procrastinating. Why? Maybe in the past someone did your work for you. Or you put the problem off for so long that the situation changed.

There are two steps to tackling procrastination:

- Manage the job. Break it down into manageable chunks.
- Manage yourself. Address the attitudes and emotions that make you continue to procrastinate.

Manage the Job

Use this three-step process to break down even the most difficult jobs into manageable chunks:

1. Split the job into manageable tasks.

Ever heard the joke: "How can an ant swallow an elephant?" The answer: "One bite at a time." Make sure your bites are specific and practical.

2. Set a reasonable deadline for each task.

When deadlines are reasonable (that is, within your ability to achieve them) yet challenging (you continue to make progress), you're not setting yourself up for failure.

3. Track your progress.

When a job is unpleasant, you can fool yourself into thinking that you're doing more than you actually are. You can increase your productivity by tracking what you've done and holding yourself accountable for meeting your commitments.

Hints for Managing the Job

Go to the "Procrastination Basher" under learning tools for a tool that will help you apply these steps.

1. Ask an experienced coworker or leader for ideas on how to break down a job.
2. Double-check your deadlines to make sure they're realistic.
3. If you're a diehard procrastinator, ask someone to hold you accountable for implementing your plan.

Manage Yourself

Procrastination usually is caused by five emotions or attitudes: confusion, boredom, anxiety, frustration or resentment, and tiredness. Read the following examples and ways to handle each.



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Some cause (Examples How to Handle)

Confusion "I don't know how to do this or where to start."

- Ask your leader or an experienced coworker for ideas on how to approach the job.
- Get their help in filling out the "Procrastination Basher" tool.

"I don't even know why I'm doing this."

- Ask those who assigned the work or who will use your work to describe why it's important.
- What do they expect, and how will they use the results.

"I got off to a good start, but now I'm not sure what to do next."

- Realize that the best plans don't always work.
- The moment you start going in circles, ask for help to identify steps for getting back on track.

Boredom "This job is mundane, routine."

- Try to look for the positive aspects of the job. Are any parts of it enjoyable?
- Is there a way you can enjoy the easiness of the job?

"The job is so tedious."

- Plan a reward for yourself when you finish the job.
- Make the job top priority, if possible. Take action to get it done sooner rather than later.

Anxiety "What if I can't do it well?"

"What if someone doesn't like the way I'm approaching this?"

"The job is difficult."

- Ask your leader or an experienced team member what level of quality is needed. Maybe you think they expect more than they do.
- Ask people if you're making the job more difficult than it needs to be. Ask for suggestions on how to simplify it.

Frustration or Resentment

"No one will notice or care."

"This seems like busywork."

"I can't get people to cooperate. I'm hitting a brick wall."

- Check with the appropriate people on whether it really should be done.
- Identify who the work will help and how.
- Ask your leader how to overcome the barriers other people seem to be creating.
- Or, if appropriate, ask your leader to step in and help you break down the barriers.



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Fatigue "I don't have the energy to do this."

- Plan to work on the task at the time of day when you have the most energy.
- Perhaps over-commitment is your problem, not procrastination. Ask your leader or a trusted team member for their perspective.
- Maybe you think you must do the job better, more often, or faster than it really needs to be done.
- Check with the person who assigned the job to make sure you understand what constitutes a "good job."
- Take a few (but not too many) short breaks as you're completing the job.
- Don't assume that you have to do it all by yourself. Consider asking a team member or internal partner for help with one or more actions.

Notes