

The 7 Step Anti-Procrastination Plan

(Adapted from Bellevue Community College Student Support Services)

Step 1: Make it meaningful

What is important about the job you've been delaying? List the benefits of getting it done. Look at in relation to your goals. Be specific about the rewards for getting it done, including how you will feel when you're done.

Step 2: Take it apart

Break big jobs into a series of small ones you can do in 15 minutes or less. If a long reading assignment intimidates you, divide it into two-page or three-page sections. Make a list of the sections and cross them off as you complete them so you can see your progress.

Step 3: Write it down

If you can't get started on a term paper, you might write down a plan on a 3x5 card, "I will write a list of at least 10 possible topics by 9 p.m. and I will reward myself with an hour of guilt-free television watching." Carry the card with you or post it where you can see it often.

Step 4: Tell everyone

Announce publicly your plan to get it done. Tell a friend you plan to learn 3 irregular Spanish verbs by Friday. Tell your spouse, roommate, parents, and children. Include anyone who will ask whether you've completed it or who will suggest ways to get it done. Make the world your support group.

Step 5: Find a reward

Construct rewards carefully. Be willing to withhold them if you do not complete the task. Don't pick a movie as a reward for studying math if you going to go to the movie anyway. When you legitimately reap your reward, notice how it feels.

Step 6: Do it now

The minute you notice yourself procrastinating, plunge into the task. It is best to just dive into something versus waiting and getting more and more anxious about it.

Step 7: Just say no

When you keep pushing a task into the low-priority category, re-examine why you are supposed to be doing it. If you realize you really don't intend to do something, quit telling yourself that you will. Just say NO! Then you're not procrastinating, and you don't have to carry around the baggage of an incomplete task.