

Procrastination

Putting off tasks is often a way people try to temporarily reduce stress. Students may also procrastinate because of a lack of prioritizing tasks, a fear of failure, confusion about how to begin a task, or dislike of doing what the task requires. It is natural to procrastinate occasionally. Excessive procrastination, though, only postpones and concentrates stress, interfering with both school and personal success. How do you know if you procrastinate excessively? Read the following statements and circle if you **agree** or **disagree**.

- A/D I often put off starting or give up after starting a task I find difficult.
- A/D I often try to do so many tasks at once that I cannot do any of them.
- A/D I often put off a task in which I have little or no interest.
- A/D I often try to come up with reasons to do something else other than a task I have to do.
- A/D I often ignore a task when I am not certain about how to start it or complete it.
- A/D I often find myself thinking that if I ignore a task, it will go away.

A/D I often cannot decide which of a number of tasks I should complete first.

A/D I often find my mind wandering to things other than the task on which I am trying to work.

If you agreed with **four or more** of these statements, you may need to work on controlling your procrastination.

Do It Now!

Here are some ways you can control procrastination:

1. Motivate yourself to work by choosing some small aspect of the task to be done. Start right away!
2. Prioritize the tasks you need to do and break large tasks into smaller, manageable parts.
3. Work on tasks at the times and in the places where you concentrate best.
4. Work on difficult or unpleasant tasks first. Then work on an easier task next. Don't forget breaks!
5. Get help from teachers or other students when you find a task to be difficult.
6. Make a schedule of the tasks you have to do and stick to it.
7. Think positively and get going!

Contact the OHS Student Services Department for more information: 608-783-4571 Feb 08

Time Management and Procrastination

Study Skills for Success



**School District of
Onalaska**

**Comprehensive School
Counseling Program**

OHS Student Services

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Take Aim At Your Goals

Time management is all about trying to find ways to complete the tasks associated with your goals. While you can't really *manage time*, you can self-manage how you spend your time. To manage your time, you need to specify what those goals are. **Write out your goals**, including long-range goals concerning your plans after high school for additional schooling, career, and life; goals for the immediate school year; and short-range goals related to your courses and your daily commitments. Keep your list of goals handy so you can make decisions that will lead to the achievement of your goals and stay motivated.

Set Priorities

The trick to prioritizing effectively is to allot time to the goals you find most important and urgent. Assign a priority value to each of the items on your "To Do" list and try to work from the most important to the least important. To prioritize your "To Do" list, decide which of your obligations is most urgent and write a number 1 in front of these jobs. Then decide which things are least urgent. Give these a number 3. Finally, place a number 2 next to the other tasks that come in between – the things that have to get done, but not right now. Then work through the jobs on your list, starting with the most urgent. Cross off each job as you complete it.

Know Where Your Time Goes

When you see how much time you actually spend on various tasks, you will know better how to direct your time for maximum gain. Track your time daily over the course of a week. You will find that you typically use half of the hours in a week (84 hours) on sleeping, eating, commuting to school and work, and personal hygiene. Your other tasks – classes, homework, part-time jobs, relaxation, social time, exercise, etc. – must be completed in the remaining 84 hours.

Reality Check

Be realistic about planning your time and the amount of time each activity will take. On days when you are working after school or have an evening activity, you are probably not going to have time for three solid hours of homework. Setting two hours for a task that you know will take you longer to complete will not improve your speed and will only cause you frustration. Make a plan you can actually follow. Take advantage of study and resource times during the school day to extend your available time for studying.

Give a Task 100% Attention

Contrary to popular belief, multi-tasking is not always a better approach. You will improve your efficiency, productivity, and the quality of your work if you focus on one task at a time (without watching television or sending text messages to friends).

Write It Down!

A written plan can help support your efforts. You may find it helpful to color code your plans to differentiate tasks. On a monthly calendar, show exams, projects, tests and assignments. Look at your calendar frequently to remind yourself of important deadlines. Use a daily or weekly planner to keep track of your important short-range tasks and appointments. Associating specific tasks with specific times (e.g., I always read my biology assignments right after supper.) may help you get them done.

Use "Hidden" Time

Make use of "hidden" time, such as car trips when you aren't driving or while waiting in line or in the dentist's office. This can help you recover hours per week. Review your notes, do some reading, jot down reminders, or finish off other tasks. This frees up time for you to use later.

