

Hacking Procrastination

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We all want to experience the power of “flow”—that moment when we’re completely in the zone, performing and feeling our best. In this state, we’re **5x more productive and 7x more creative**, and it feels amazing. But, getting into flow is much easier said than done. Sometimes, we actually find ourselves dragging our feet on certain tasks, and it makes us feel guilty and anxious.

In most scenarios, however, a little bit of procrastination can help your productivity. Creating some pre-deadline tension is often the key to producing your best and most creative work. When you find yourself struggling through a procrastination period, here are some helpful tips to help get you back on track.

#1

Think of yourself as “pressure prompted.”

Reclaim the power of procrastination by rebranding it! Often times, this is just your way of creating a healthy amount of tension before a deadline. Begin to notice how much pressure works best for you, and to get creative in how you inject that tension into your life. And next time you “procrastinate,” don’t get down on yourself. Celebrate that great things are about to happen!

#2

Do no harm

Procrastinating is not a sin as long as it is sustainable. To ensure no one else suffers from your procrastination (especially colleagues you respect), start by checking your calendar and identifying any “hot” items on your to-do list, or those assignments that simply have no deadline flexibility. Make sure that your unique approach to time management never becomes someone else’s problem.

#3

Optimize

Get clear on your outcomes. Take some time to think about which tasks are essential to achieve success, and how to tackle them most effectively. Can you break the task into chunks? What is the best plan of attack?

Look at your surroundings. Are there quick things you can do right now to optimize yourself and your environment? Set a timer for 5-10 minutes and clear your desk, throw stuff out, clean your inbox, or find a new place to do work for a little while.



#4

Clear the decks

Don't waste your time working on dreadful projects way in advance. Instead, you can do smaller things now to minimize the pain of the heavy lifting when the deadline is near. This could be anything from doing some googling, organizing meeting notes, or emailing questions to people who need to get you answers in order to make the project successful. Procrastination is fine until you start making last minute requests of others.



#5

Tackle less painful projects first

Don't waste your time working on projects you don't want to do and won't do in advance. This will only frustrate you and waste your time. If you know you won't really get going until the deadline is close, use your energy wisely on other things.



#6

"Carbo-load"

Prepare for the impending sprint. Listen to your body. Are you hydrated? Rested? Really re-energize yourself (and your loved ones) proactively. Whether that means you take a walk, grab a cup of coffee, or chat with a friend—make sure you take advantage of this time to recharge your brain and do things that bring you joy. If you're planning to do a big sprint tomorrow, make sure you stock up on sleep tonight.



#7

Have a contingency plan

The closer you are to the deadline, the less agility you will have to try it again in the morning. Have a viable contingency plan...just in case!



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