

Awareness Check 11

ARE YOU A PROCRASTINATOR?

To find out whether procrastination is keeping you from getting your work done, put a check beside the statements that apply to you.

- 1. I put off doing an assignment if it seems too difficult.
- 2. I put off doing an assignment if completing it will take a lot of time.
- 3. I put off studying if I don't like the subject.
- 4. I put off studying if I'm not in the mood.
- 5. I put off writing an essay if I don't know how to begin.
- 6. I put off studying for a test if I don't know what the test will cover.
- 7. I put off studying if I get hungry.
- 8. I put off studying if I am too tired.
- 9. I put off studying if I don't feel well.
- 10. I put off studying if there is something else I'd rather do.

All the items above describe common tactics students use to avoid studying. To build confidence, you need to understand when and why you procrastinate and to fight your tendency to delay getting started.

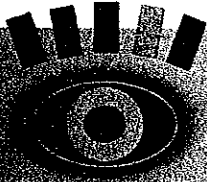
Why Do People Procrastinate?

Ann has to write a research paper for her composition course. The paper is due in six weeks. She thinks she has plenty of time, so for the first two weeks, she doesn't even think about the project. That leaves her only a month in which to choose a topic, do her research in the library, make an outline, and write the paper. It takes her another week to select a topic, but when she gets to the library, she finds that several of the books she wants have been checked out. By the time Ann decides on another topic and compiles her research materials, she has only one week left to complete the paper. She *does* hand it in on time, but she knows it's not her best effort. She doesn't like to write anyway and is not expecting to receive a very good grade. "Next time," she swears, "I'll get started sooner." But next time Ann will probably procrastinate again because that is her pattern of behavior. She doesn't like to do difficult or lengthy assignments and will put them off until the last minute. Like many students, Ann procrastinates for one of four common reasons. Perhaps you also procrastinate for one of these reasons:

- Your tasks seem difficult or time-consuming.
- You have trouble getting started.

- You lack motivation to do the work.
- You are afraid of failing.

Putting off difficult or time-consuming assignments makes them even harder to do when you actually get started and further ensures that you won't be able to do your best because you will not have enough time. However, a task may be less difficult than you think if you break it down into segments that you can handle during short periods of time. If you have trouble getting started on an assignment, or if you waste a lot of time before sitting down to study, then you may be using avoidance tactics. Why are you avoiding what you have to do? Perhaps you aren't interested in the subject, or perhaps you'd simply prefer to be doing something else. You may be insufficiently motivated to perform the work. You may not see a direct connection between the assignment and your goals or your overall grade in the course. Or you may be afraid of failure. If you believe that you will not get a good grade—no matter what you do—you may delay getting started on an assignment. Complete Awareness Check 12 for more insight into why you procrastinate.



Awareness Check 12

WHAT IS YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD STUDYING?

Read all of the following study situations and imagine that they apply to you. Put a check in the column that best describes how you feel about each one; then add up your checks. An explanation of your results follows.

Positive **Negative**

Study Situation

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1. A term paper is due at the end of the term.
2. Midterm exams are next week.
3. You have major tests in two classes this week.
4. In one of your classes, the final exam will determine whether you pass or fail.
5. You are in a self-paced math course. You have a list of assignments and several tests to complete by semester's end.
6. You have a sixty-page chapter to read in your psychology text for tomorrow's class.
7. You have a speech to prepare for your speech class.
8. You have a five-hundred-word essay to write for your composition class.
9. You have final exams to study for in all of your classes.
10. You are taking an anatomy course. You must learn the names of all the bones in the body.