

EFFECTIVE PROCRASTINATION

Can procrastinating ever overcome its inherently evil nature to be an effective time management strategy? The answer is yes - well, maybe. It is possible and very helpful to learn to recognize when putting a task off and doing something else is an intelligent, conscious decision, and when it's just procrastinating.

RECOGNIZE THE DIFFERENCE

The decision to procrastinate is usually made in a few seconds, with little or no thought given to the reasons for putting something off or the consequences of doing so. By contrast, if the decision to do something later is made slowly, thoughtfully, and with full awareness of the consequences, it can be a sensible decision that can result in the work being done more effectively. First, however, you have to understand why you don't feel like doing the task at the moment. The questions in [Understanding Procrastination](#) provide a framework for analyzing and coming to grips with the underpinnings of your particular procrastination habit.



If you've done some analysis, slowed down the decision to procrastinate, and still honestly arrive at the conclusion that the task will get done more easily or effectively later, then the chances are good that your decision to do the task at a different time is a valid one. If you think of effective procrastinating as postponing a task rather than procrastinating, the implication is that there is some justification for why the work cannot be done now. Another assumption inherent in the word "postpone" is that the task will get done later at a specified time. With procrastination, "later" is usually a vague, undetermined time, with the result that, all too often, the task doesn't get done at all.

When you "postpone" a task, be sure to specify the time it will get done and write the task into your time plan. Make a contract with yourself that you will do the task at this alternate time and not put it off again. You can strengthen your resolve by setting a special [reward](#) for doing the task. You can also use [flexible time](#) to provide an alternate work period - an important safety net for when you feel it really would be more effective to do the work later.