**Overcoming Procrastination**

**Procrastination may do more harm than you think.**

William Knaus reports in his book *Do It Now: Break the Procrastination Habit*, an alarming **90% of college students procrastinate, 25% of whom consider themselves chronic procrastinators**. Procrastinating can be extremely detrimental to a college student’s success both personally and academically. When work is left to the last minute, students feel overwhelmed and anxious. Consequently, it is difficult for students to think clearly in such a state. Procrastinating students submit poor work because they have not had enough time to proofread, complete all steps of an assignment or make revisions.

Students often procrastinate for the following reasons:

1. poor time management
2. lack of concentration
3. the temptation to socialize
4. allowing low priority tasks or small tasks (such as picking out the font for your paper) interfere with high priority tasks (writing the actual paper)
5. perfectionism
6. belief that it can all be squeezed in at the last minute
7. belief that the work is unimportant or will not be effective.

Procrastination can be a serious problem with significant psychological implications for some students. Such students may need to seek out professional services; however, for most students, simply following the suggestions below will alleviate the burdens of procrastination and open the door to productivity!

* Do not accept your own excuses. Check your self-talk: don’t tell yourself “I can get it done later” or “I still have plenty of time.” Instead, use positive statements such as “If I get this done now, I will not have to worry about it later.”
* Keep your eyes on the prize! You may not like every step of your progress towards your degree, every course or every professor, but remember that each class will bring you a few steps closer to becoming a college graduate.
* See all events as learning opportunities. Some of your greatest life lessons will arise from completing assignments or doing work you do not want to do. You will learn perseverance and how to overcome obstacles though these experiences.
* Break down assignments into small tasks and do one task at a time. For example, collect your journal articles today, write your outline tomorrow and write the introduction the day after that. Plan ahead so you can complete a small task each day until the assignment is due.
* When a classmate or friend asks how an assignment is moving along, give positive statements with firm time commitments: “I’m going to get the works cited page written tonight” or “I’m going to finish the lab report today.” Later when you should be doing the work, remember these statements you told other people and let this peer pressure push you along to completing the task.
* If you have trouble concentrating, study with a friend or in the presence of someone who does not. Try studying in study lounges with other students engaged in their work.
* Use every bit of available time. Read while you are waiting for class to start, on the train or while eating lunch. Complete math problems during a break at your on-campus job.
* When faced with multiple assignments, do the most challenging assignment first.
* Avoid temptations rather than try to resist them. If you have to fight falling asleep while reading in bed, don’t read in bed. Don’t study in a room with things that might tempt you like the TV, phone or video games.
* Get plenty of sleep so that you can concentrate on your work.
* Take regular study breaks (10 minutes for every hour of studying) but avoid things that are hard to stop once you start such as emailing friends, watching TV or playing a computer game. Try stretching and going for a short walk outside.