


Introduction

[Procrastination – from the Latin for “until tomorrow”]

Everyone, at some point, postpones and even tries to avoid unpleasant tasks – it is a normal human reaction. Third level students can be particularly vulnerable when it comes to putting things off, possibly because the amount of work expected of them, the lack of formal structure and the range of tempting social distractions. However, if you get very far behind with your work you may end up feeling anxious, and you may need to address this difficulty.

Signs of Procrastination

Do any of these sound familiar to you?

- **Difficulty in starting** a piece of work or revision
- Constantly putting back the starting time, or waiting for the “right moment” for inspiration to strike
- **Craving diversion**– Does the need to tidy your room, do the shopping, phone a friend become irresistible when you think about starting work? Do friends and social opportunities easily distract you from your work?
- **Ineffective working** – Do you spend time in the library but end up with little to show for it? Do you stare at a blank piece of paper without being able to start writing?

- **Last minute rushing** – Is all you work finally done at breakneck speed the night before the final deadline or the exam? Do you often find that you have not left enough time to do the work justice?
- **Nagging guilt** – Is your time off from work spoiled by nagging guilt that you should be working?
- **Missed deadlines** – Do you often request extensions in an effort to ‘perfect’ a piece of work.


If you find that some of these apply to you, please read on.

What causes us to procrastinate?


In order for you to be tackling your procrastination, it may be important for you to understand what may be causing this habit of putting things off.

Common causes include.....

- **Lack of self-confidence**- It is not easy to tackle a number of assignments or a pile of revision. People with low self-confidence may think that starting into college work is not easy because they are a poor student. In other words, they may believe that they themselves have a problem, rather than acknowledging that college work can sometimes be daunting. Blaming

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- **Getting overwhelmed**– It is easy to get overwhelmed by the amount of study and just give up and leave it until tomorrow. There are some practical time management skills that will prevent this. Please read the leaflets on time management and study skills.
 - **Unrealistic expectations**-People who expect themselves to excel all of the time may become anxious about submitting course work and doing exams in case their work is judged to be below the level they set for themselves. By leaving everything until the last moment and doing a ‘rush job’ we provide ourselves with the perfect excuse if our results are disappointing to us.
 - Depression – Inability to concentrate and lack of motivation may be symptoms of depression. If you have other symptoms, e.g. lack of energy/appetite, difficulty sleeping, some social isolation, please read the leaflet on depression.

How to break the habit

- Contact the Student Counsellor for assistance with study skills and time management skills
 - Don’t stop because something is difficult – seek assistance from a friend or lecturer.
 - Don’t just shelve the problem – that will not sort it out.
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- Don't aim for the impossible – aim to do well. Bear in mind that it may take you a while to adjust to third level and that the grades you achieved in second level may not be as easily achieved in third level. If you acknowledge that you do have a difficulty in setting realistic targets, it may be useful to explore this with the Student Counsellor, before the situation becomes too difficult for you.

Don't delay – ask for some help today!

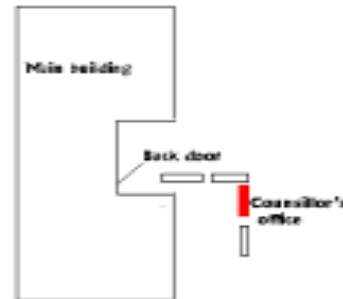
Where to find Help

Student Counselling Service

Portacabin 3 behind the main building.

Tel: ext 2635 (from outside 4042635)

E-mail: aisling.obrien@it-tallaght.ie



Some Reading

The Student Counselling Service has produced leaflets on study skills and time management. Below are some books which are available in the **Institute Library**.

Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway
- Susan Jeffers

Managing your Own Learning at University
- Aidan Moran

The Good Study Guide
- Andrew Northedge

Improving Study Skills
- Conrad Lashley

Procrastination

(putting things off)



Student Counselling Service

Student Services

Institute of Technology, Tallaght
