



## Procrastination: is it making you sick?

*Procrastination is one of the most common and deadliest of diseases and its toll on success and happiness is heavy.* Wayne Gretsky

Procrastination is defined as the deferment of actions or tasks to a later time (Wikipedia). It can be a persistent and debilitating disorder in some people, causing significant psychological disability and dysfunction and is often cited by psychologists as a coping mechanism for the anxiety associated with starting or completing any task or decision. To be classified as procrastination, this human behaviour must be counterproductive, needless and delaying.

An amazing 75 per cent of people consider themselves to be procrastinators. Whether you're an adult who puts off paying the bills, a salesperson who neglects to make follow-up calls or a student who plays video games instead of working on a project, chances are you're no different from most of us. But, although it's common to procrastinate to some degree, it becomes a problem when it interferes with your normal day-to-day functioning.

Categorized as a behavioural condition, persistent procrastination may lead to psychological problems and dysfunction such as stress, extreme anxiety, guilt, obsessive compulsive disorder, attention deficit disorder and illnesses related to memory loss. Although not considered by society as a health-related condition, procrastination is believed to have an impact on self-regulation problems such as substance abuse, compromised immune systems that contribute to more colds, the flu and gastro-intestinal problems, insomnia and even severe depression.

There are many reasons people procrastinate: whether due to fear, anxiety, a lack of self-confidence, laziness, anger or a feeling of being overwhelmed, it is important to recognize there is more pain in procrastinating than in coping with the pressures.

The following are a few pointers that may be helpful in combating procrastination before it gets out of control:

- Set goals that are attainable – don't set yourself up to fail.
- Divide large tasks into smaller pieces – don't bite off more than you can chew.
- Avoid distractions – it's hard enough to concentrate.
- Share your goal with others – use peer pressure to push you forward.
- Choose and emulate role models – strive to be like the people you admire.
- Plan ahead and stick to the plan.
- Reward yourself for completing the task.

Don't let procrastination rule your life like a disease that annihilates success...

### Interesting Stats

1. 75% of people consider themselves procrastinators.
2. 80-95% of college students engage in procrastination.
3. 95% of procrastinators wish they could reduce the behaviour.

*(Source: The Psychological Bulletin of the American Psychological Association)*