

How to... Avoid Procrastination

During emerging adulthood, one faces many new responsibilities and obligations. This can be overwhelming at times. Once you leave home, you no longer have your parents watching over you, making sure you get everything done. This is especially crucial when it comes to homework. Most of the assignments one receives in college are more long-term than those given in out in high school. As a result, one must possess a large amount of self-discipline in order to get things done on time and not last minute.

The key to avoiding procrastination is time management. At the beginning of a semester, professors will give out copies of the class syllabus which includes dates of important assignments, projects, and exams. More or less, professors will tend to stick to these dates. These can serve as guides for you entire semester if you compile them into one big syllabus for all of your classes.

- Your first step is to buy a planner with ample space to write down daily reading assignments as well as monthly calendars to plan for more long-term assignments.

Your choice of planner is very important. It needs to be a size which allows you to carry it with your books to class. Often times, a professor will change a date to an assignment and you will assume you will remember the alteration. This is not always the case. If you have a planner with you at all times, you will be able to make a note of the change.

- Next, you need to sit down with all of your syllabi, going through them one by one and writing down all major assignments and exams. It is helpful to obtain different colored pens/markers/pencils and to write down all of a class' due dates in one color and another class in a different color.
- It is also important to locate your school's academic calendar and make note of critical dates, such as vacations, registration periods, drop/add times, days off, and so forth.

On a more daily basis, one should utilize the aid of lists and goal setting. At the beginning of each day, I plan out everything I want to get done by the end of the night. I make a list, including all classes, meetings, and even lunch/dinner plans. Then, I find significant gaps in the list of things I have to do in order to make room for the things I need to get done.

- Make plans to finish the assignments with the most immediate due dates first.
- If one has time, they should work on the most upcoming long-term assignment.
- It is important to schedule breaks.
- It helps to have this list posted or out somewhere where you can cross off what you have done. It will remind you that you are making progress and are getting things done.
- At the end of the night, do not throw out the list. You should keep it for the next morning so that you can reference what you did not get done the previous night and add it to the new list.

Here are some helpful resources:

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/success/time.html>

<http://www.yorku.ca/cdc/lsp/tmonline/time.htm>

Study Power: Study Skills to Improve Your Learning and Your Grades
by William Luckie, Wood Smethurst