

News & Announcements

Preparing for Exams

Is it too early to be thinking about exams? We don't think so. Successful planning for exams begins early in the semester. Make a plan to get your best score on every test this year. Here are some quick **tips for exam prep success:**

- ▶ Set goals
- ▶ Attend all classes
- ▶ Take notes; ask questions in class
- ▶ Review your notes
- ▶ Organize & stay organized
- ▶ Do your homework every night
- ▶ Ask for help when you need it
- ▶ Set aside time to review past notes
- ▶ Look ahead to upcoming topics
- ▶ Summarize your notes orally or in writing
- ▶ Memorize & recite facts
- ▶ Make up quizzes for yourself
- ▶ Schedule in extra study time before exams
- ▶ Build confidence in your ability to do well

Exam Prep Workshops

Are you interested in having a workshop in your school or home?

Exam Preparation Workshops

- ▶ 2 hour intensive workshops for 4 to 50 students
- ▶ Build confidence
- ▶ Learn memory techniques
- ▶ Find out how to answer exam questions

Contact us for more information.

Peer Tutor Talks

If you are interested in hosting a talk by Smart Tutor Referrals, please contact us. 30 minute - 1 hour talks for peer tutors are offered free of charge as a community service.

Getting Down to Work: Procrastination and Homework

by Dahlia Miller

"Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michaelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein."

H. Jackson Brown, Jr. (American Writer)

What we do doesn't always make sense. Procrastinating is one of those behaviours that is really quite irrational. Despite not receiving any obvious personal benefit from procrastinating, people often engage in this type of behaviour over and over again. In fact, 95% of people procrastinate at least sometimes.

Students, especially, are prone to procrastination. It's almost like they are testing to see if this work-strategy is actually effective. And, in most cases, it isn't. So, the trick is to learn to recognize what procrastination looks like, and either train new habits or learn to use procrastination to advantage.

Are You a Procrastinator?

(Check as many as apply)

Do you ever:

- Have a small or big task that you've been "meaning to do" for the longest time but never seem to get to it
- Carry books or texts in your pack (or have them sitting on your desk) but never actually read them
- Ignore projects until very close to their deadline
- Hand work in late
- Have to have everything "just right" before starting work
- Have trouble deciding what to do first – so you don't do anything
- Write and re-write first sentences or paragraphs looking for the "perfect" words or the "perfect" start
- Cram for exams
- Rush out the door, nearly late for every appointment
- Feel sensitive when people ask if you've done your work
- Give up if something feels too difficult
- Put off work to the point of feeling uncomfortable about it
- Hope that your work will go away if you ignore it
- Feel guilty about being late with work or not getting it done at all
- Feel a nagging upset because you have been putting something off
- Fantasize about the terrible things that will happen if you don't do this one thing
- Take many, many breaks in the middle of doing a task you don't like
- Get up to fix a snack every time you sit down to work
- Have undone tasks piling up
- Sit down to work but find yourself daydreaming or being distracted
- Wonder why you should bother doing a specific task (and come up with reasons not to do it)

About Us

Our Mission Is:

- ▶ To provide top quality, flexible learning support and service to students and parents through:

***In-home private tutoring**
matched specifically to
each student's needs.*

***Stimulating workshops**
building skills in a practical
and creative way.*

- ▶ To enhance students' skills and increase learning confidence through one-on-one support that is truly individualized, recognizing each student's unique abilities.
- ▶ To improve the quality of life, in individuals and communities through education.

Our tutors are certified teachers and professionals. They are carefully screened and chosen specially to match the needs and learning styles of each student.

We support families in education.

For more information and resources, visit us on-line at:

www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

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Procrastination is a painful game to play, and it often ends up with the procrastinator not living up to his or her potential and feeling at least somewhat stressed. The procrastination equation is a complex one involving:

- ▶ the amount of desire to complete the task (*or motivation*)
- ▶ the expectation of success or failure (*or confidence in one's skills*)
- ▶ the value of completion (*or reward*)
- ▶ the immediacy of task (*or deadline*)
- ▶ the personal sensitivity to delay (*anxiousness, perfectionism, or lethargy*)

While almost everyone recognizes the down-side of procrastination, it's not always easy to let go of the behaviour. Kids especially, may not know why they are procrastinating or how to make a change.

Tips for Procrastinating Students

▶ Have a "work first" policy so that chores or homework are always done before TV or computer time.

▶ Set a workspace away from distractions with a full set of supplies.

▶ Get help when you need it.

▶ Schedule free time. Students often take frequent breaks or avoid work altogether fearing that they won't get any time off to play. This usually backfires as the time is often fused with an underlying sense of guilt or nervousness.

▶ Make a list of tasks to complete. Prioritize the list so the most important ones are addressed early on.

▶ Develop a system to tackle big or daunting jobs. Not knowing where to start can make a challenge seem un-do-able. If there is a known system for dealing with larger tasks the fear of the unknown is reduced.

▶ Break large tasks into more manageable steps and plot them on a calendar or timeline.

▶ Reward completion of a task every step of the way. It's easier to get work done knowing it will be recognized. A high-five, extra computer time, and a pat on the back are worthy rewards.

▶ If 1 hour feels like too long to work, then set a timer for 10 or 15 minutes and really focus during that time. Commit to working without interruption during that set period of time.

▶ If a full chapter feels like too much to read, set a goal to read one page at a time (or one sentence or paragraph for younger students).

▶ Do the hardest task first (or second). Get the most dreaded items up and off the slate first and everything will seem easier after that.

▶ Imagine how great it will feel to be done with the task. Use your mind to focus on the relief, gratification and self-satisfaction of having completed the task rather than on the dread of not getting it done.

▶ Make boring jobs more enjoyable by being creative – stand and walk or dance while memorizing, listen to music while doing mundane tasks, work with a friend.

▶ Tell a friend about your task and your goal. Email or call to say how long you are going to work and then check in with them to see if you did the work. Making yourself accountable to a supportive, uninvolved person is a great motivator.

▶ Set a routine for yourself – but start slowly expecting yourself to conform to it. After you've gotten used to getting down to work at the same time every day, eventually it will become, well, routine and you'll follow through on what needs to be done when it needs to be done.

▶ If you find yourself procrastinating – do useful tasks that you might not get to normally during that time (clean your work area, plan ahead, do errands, help someone else, answer your mail, go for a walk, exercise).

▶ If it's on your to-do list more than 3 times, face up to it – it's either not important enough for you to do or you're not going to do it. Start the task or forget about it (obviously some tasks can't really be forgotten, so get started).

▶ Be okay with just being human. Don't strive for perfection – there will always be small mistakes.

▶ Congratulate yourself for working.

"I'm late ... because I can't decide which side of the bed to get out of."

Anne Walsh (Irish Writer)