

DEALING WITH PROCRASTINATION

Here are some strategies that can be helpful. Try them, and develop those that work best for you.

1. USE THE PARETO PRINCIPLE

- 20% of your effort will bring you 80% of your results; in any task, go after the essentials
- Focus your effort on the 20% that will make a difference, instead of on the 80% that won't add much
- Prioritize your effort

2. MAKE THE TASK EASY

- Break it down into parts
- Start with an 'warm up' task
- Say you will work on it for at least 10 minutes – set your timer, and don't stop
- Sandwich hard stuff in between pleasant stuff
- Vary the learning activity: put ideas in/pull ideas out
- Distribute learning over time
- Substitute "I should" with "I'd like to"
- Take short breaks

3. DEAL WITH WORRY AND ANXIETY

- Find out what you need to do & know to do this task
- Use resources: see the professor, TA, visit the Student Success Centre
- Get help: get a tutor, see a librarian, use another text, talk to classmates
- Join or make a study group
- Better to do it less than perfectly than not at all. Just get it done
- Believe in yourself. Think of a time when you made it work

4. SET ARTIFICIAL DEADLINES

- Break down tasks into parts and set specific time limits for each
- Make a timeline for the project, with parts due on certain days/weeks
- Tell someone what you plan to do, and when you will be finished
- Reward yourself if you finish on time

5. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ENOUGH TIME FOR ALL THAT YOU PLAN TO DO

- Use a planner like the Finding Time to Study grid (see SLS Online handout)
- Plan out how you will use your time; use quality time when you are most resilient
- Use an agenda; make to do lists
- Play fair! Discipline yourself to work at planned times

6. STUDY SMART (IN ORDER TO STUDY LESS!)

- Use ACTIVE LEARNING techniques for reading and studying (see SLS Active Learning handout for ideas)
- Know your distractors, and control for them (turn off your phone)
- Learn as you go, do all that you can so that you don't fall behind!
- Learn from your mistakes
- Try a new learning/study/writing/problem-solving strategy and see what results