FREE WORKSHEET · WORK & LIFE

Why Am I Putting This Off?

Understand what is behind the delay, then make the first step small enough to take

Procrastination is rarely laziness. In capable people it is more often a way of avoiding an uncomfortable feeling: the fear of getting it wrong, of being judged, of finding out the task is harder than expected, or the discomfort of not knowing where to start.

Putting it off brings relief in the moment, which is why the habit sticks. The cost arrives later, usually with interest.

IF YOU NEED HELP NOW

If there is an immediate risk to life, call **999**. The Samaritans are available free, 24 hours a day, on **116 123**. In England, NHS 111 (option 2) connects to an urgent mental health service.

01

What is behind the delay?

Think of one thing you keep putting off. How true is each of these?

0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = quite a lot, 3 = very true

	0	1	2	3
I am worried it will not be good enough	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am worried about how others will judge it	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do not know where to start	☐	☐	☐	☐
It feels too big	☐	☐	☐	☐
I find it boring or unrewarding	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am waiting to feel ready, or in the right mood	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do not have what I need yet	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am not convinced it matters	☐	☐	☐	☐
I work better under pressure, so I leave it late	☐	☐	☐	☐

High scores on the first two suggest perfectionism or fear of judgement is involved. On the next two, the task needs breaking down. On the last few, the issue may be clarity, resources or priorities.

02

Make the first step small enough to take

STEP	WHAT EXACTLY (20 MINUTES OR LESS)	WHEN
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Things that help:

- Aim for done, not perfect. Decide what “good enough” looks like before you start.
- Start for ten minutes only. Starting is usually the hardest part.
- Remove one distraction before you begin.
- Tell someone what you will have done by when.
- Notice and acknowledge each step you complete.