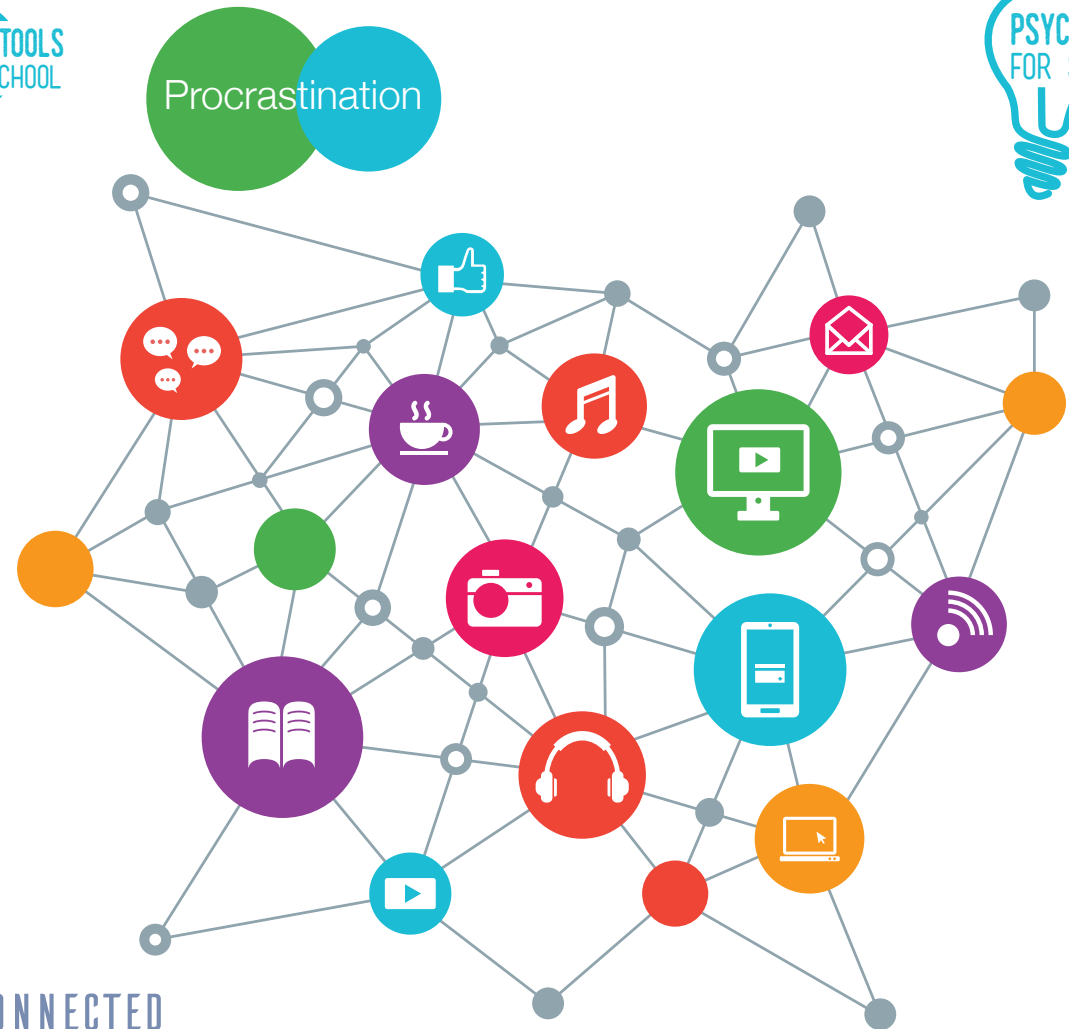


ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT

Now that you know procrastination is about avoiding negative emotions (not time management) you are better positioned to overcome it.

Try some of these tips:

- Break the cycle: don't believe your own lies that you will feel better about your tasks tomorrow.
- Instead of focusing on how you feel, focus on the next small action you can take.
- Empathize with your future self and do some of the work now to put future-you in a much better position.
- When procrastination does happen, acknowledge it, forgive yourself, and move on to your next small action.
- Procrastinate your procrastination. Feel the need to procrastinate? Just put it off until tomorrow!



STAY CONNECTED

For more information on procrastination, along with tips for overcoming it, read the work of Dr. Timothy Pychyl: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/dont-delay>

To access other **Psychtools for School** resources please visit: <http://tinyurl.com/hbw7zff>

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SITUATION

Sam wants to succeed in school but she tends to put off her work until the last possible moment. She was supposed to begin studying for her stats exam yesterday but her room needed to be cleaned. Then her bookshelf needed alphabetizing. And then her friend called to say that he was lining up to get Taco Bell's new Cheese-lupa, which is five different kinds of cheese wrapped in a piece of American cheese. How does anyone say no to that?

By the end of the day, Sam's textbook had remained closed. She hadn't learned anything about statistics but lots of little tasks and distractions filled her time.

PSYCHOLOGY CAN EXPLAIN THAT

Procrastination is one example of self-regulation failure. By giving into distraction, you're sabotaging your goal to succeed. Getting work done in the present means we can protect our future selves from disappointment.

So, why does this happen?

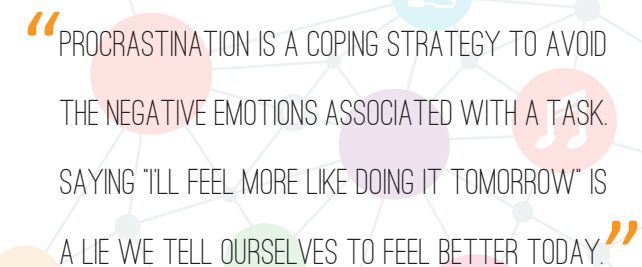
Procrastination is an emotion-focused coping strategy. It offers us a way to avoid the negative emotions associated with a task. Sometimes schoolwork can be frustrating or boring and it's much easier to tell ourselves that we will feel like doing the task tomorrow. In the meantime, we distract ourselves and try to escape that negative mood state.

In short, don't lie to yourself and expect that you will want to perform the task tomorrow. Be a super friend to your future self and do a better job of regulating your emotions today.

CONSEQUENCES

Understanding procrastination is important because it is associated with a host of negative outcomes:

- You may actually miss deadlines and hamper your progress on important projects and goals
- Procrastination impairs performance. You may complete the task but it will not be done as well as if you had begun work earlier
- Your future self will pay the price for your short-term mood repair. The work will still need to be done but there will be an added time burden and more stress
- You will experience that shameful moment when you notice the corner store cashier ringing up your usual purchases before you even reach the counter



“PROCRASTINATION IS A COPING STRATEGY TO AVOID THE NEGATIVE EMOTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH A TASK. SAYING “I’LL FEEL MORE LIKE DOING IT TOMORROW” IS A LIE WE TELL OURSELVES TO FEEL BETTER TODAY.”