



# What Causes Procrastination and How to Deal with It

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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Sometimes people delay or postpone things that are important. Then they end up in trouble or in crisis and don't know what to do. There are several reasons why this happens:

1. Misinformation - You might not understand that there are serious consequences that will result from your inaction. Not doing your Income Tax on time, for example will cost you dearly in interest and penalties. "No big deal" can turn into a really big deal.
2. Being naïve - Some people think that things will resolve on their own and therefore wait and hope that things will work out without input. Unfortunately, this doesn't usually happen. Action is better than inaction.
3. Unhealthy dependence - Are you used to having someone else do the things that are your responsibility? You might get away with that for a period of time but eventually the buck will stop with you! Maturity means doing all the things you don't want to do anyway!
4. Avoidance - Often people believe that taking action will cause pain or vulnerability, so they instead retreat into the zone where they feel safe and comfortable.
5. Lack of skills - We live in an age of information so trying to get out of doing something is no excuse. There are many free resources in the community and of course, you can learn to do almost anything on YouTube. Research or find someone who will teach you what you need to know to get the job done.
6. No time - This is just an excuse. Each of us has the same amount of time to work with. Time isn't the problem. Time management is.
7. Fear - On March 4, 1933, in his first Inaugural Address as President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "The only thing to fear is fear itself". The best solution for conquering fear is to do the thing that scares you.
8. Motivation - If you aren't interested, you might be tempted to avoid doing a task. The strange thing, however, is that once you start doing it, you will likely become interested.
9. Rebellion - Trying to get even or prove a point might just end up giving you a bad reputation and cause other people to avoid you. And... you won't finish the thing that you were responsible for doing.
10. Perfectionism - Many individuals never get started because they think that if they can't do something perfectly, they shouldn't bother trying. The only guarantee that you have with this attitude is that you will never finish if you don't start.
11. Fatigue - We all do better when we are rested. When I was doing my master's degree, I would go home from work, set an alarm, nap for two hours and then tackle my assignments. It took about a third of the time to complete the project than if I had tried to do it when I was tired. Plan rest times to enhance productivity.

12. Worry about outcome - Failure is a way to learn but if you are worried about failing and, as a result, never get started then you will never have an opportunity to succeed or to learn new ways.

Is there something that you have been procrastinating about? The time to make a change is now!