

Procrastinator's GUIDE

Tips for beginning projects that might seem overwhelming or that you don't know how to do or want to do.

By Cara Brook

From my years of experience as a professional organizer, there are three basic reasons people procrastinate:

The task is way too big, and we get overwhelmed.

We have no idea how to do whatever has been asked of us.

Plain and simple, we just don't want to do it.

If one or more of these examples resonate with you, keep reading for some tips on how to get motivated.





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The Task is Too Big

If you have a task on your "to do" list that is overwhelming you because it seems way too big and you just don't know how to get started, chances are this is more like a project and requires its own task list.

Start by brainstorming all the tasks that need to happen to bring this project to completion. Don't worry about putting things in any type of order; just write them all down.

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When you think your list is complete, group all the related tasks together. For instance, if you are planning an event, there may be a group of tasks related to the venue, another group of tasks related to entertainment, etc. Do your best to group them all.

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Now prioritize your tasks. Once you have your final list, it may be easier to see which items are more important or time sensitive and need to be addressed first. If that's still not clear, start with the smallest task.

1	6
2	7
3	8
4	9
5	10

Sometimes getting started is the hardest part. Once you begin to check things off the list, you will be motivated to keep going.



I Don't Know How to Do It

We often look at the end result of what we are trying to do and think, "How the heck do I even attempt to get there?" It's a great question, but don't let it discourage you. Ask a few follow-up questions like these:

Do I know someone who has already done this or something similar? If so, ask him or her for guidance.

Can I find information online about how to get this done? If so, do a little research by reading and/or watching a video about it.

Is there someone to whom I can delegate even a portion of this task? If so, contact him or her immediately. Delegation may mean paying someone to get the task done, but that's when you need to consider the value of your time versus money spent.

I Don't Want to Do It

There are a lot of things we put on our "to do" lists (or someone else puts on our lists) that we really do not want to do. If you find yourself continually ignoring the same task, ask yourself a few questions.

- Can I delegate this to someone else? There may be someone who enjoys the task more than you or can possibly get it done more quickly. If that's the case, delegate.

- Does the task really need to get done? We often put items on our lists that we would like to do. Wouldn't it be nice if ... ? However, it's not critically important, and we would rather spend our time doing something else. If this task is something you can live without, take it off the list.

- Can I get some help? There may be something on the list you do not want to do but it's also not something you can delegate. This one comes down to motivation. We all know how to exercise, right? But we don't always do it. We can't delegate it to someone else, and it really is something we need to do for our health. So how do we get motivated? We ask for help. We can hire a personal trainer or enlist the help of a friend who also needs some motivation to exercise. Either way, you now have to set up an appointment with someone else to exercise. It's much harder to slack off on your commitment when another person is counting on you to show up.

