Procrastination and Time Management

by Gloria Rose Koepping, Ph.D.
When has procrastination been a problem for you?
Procrastination is a behavior that means postponing something that needs to be done. All behavior at some point in time is useful. In the past you may have not wanted to do something, or felt hurt or fearful, or just not known what to do. You put off doing the task and that strategy worked.

Now you find that same strategy is getting in your way. You can make a change if you want, to fit your new situation and take you on a new path.
This is a graphic from project management theory. Notice the first step is to figure out the scope of the project. (What has to be done.)
The second step is to figure out how much time it will take to complete the project and make a timeline.

The last step is accepting the cost of time and energy it will take to complete the task and then you can begin.
START THE DAY YOU GET THE ASSIGNMENT. THAT DAY, WRITE DOWN THE ASSIGNMENT AND DUE DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR.
After that, put the times down that you will be working on the project so you do a little every day up until the time it is done or it is due. This will ensure it gets done on time with the quality you desire.
List small tasks - that only take a minute or two that can get you started.

Do anything connected with the goal - if it is a paper, then type the tentative title and your name first.

Use the **10 minute plan** on a dreaded task. Work for 10 min. and then decide if you want to work another 10.
Frequently there are personal reasons from the past that support our habit of continuing to procrastinate. These personal reasons can be explored and usually eliminated by talking once or twice to a counselor. Once you have the knowledge of what guides your behavior than you do not need to fear the unknown.
Emergency Procrastination Management in 10-15 minutes

Rule: You may not move on to item#2 until you have finished item #1.
1. **Empty or Clear your mind.** On a sheet of paper write down all your thoughts, every worry, feeling or concern that’s on your mind right at this moment. Use words, phrases, sentences, and pictures. Be specific. (take 5-8 min.)
2. **Circle Important Items.** From the items, words, thoughts, sentences, pictures or phrases listed above, choose the ones that are most important to do right now. **Circle them.**
3. **Choose.** From the important circled items select three and number them in degree of importance to be completed, #1, #2, #3. On a 3x5 index card or a sheet of paper, write these three items in the order of priority to be completed.
4. **Take Action.** Start with item #1 at the top of the list and **JUST DO IT!** Only when it is completed can you go on to item #2, item #3, etc.
If you need additional help in developing a plan to get your work done, just come to the Counseling Center and set up a time to meet with a Counselor. We would be glad to assist you.

We work in Building 6, upper floor, in the Student Development Center. Our Phone # is 206 592-3353.