



CREATE YOUR GAME PLAN FOR OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION

We've covered a wealth of material in *The Anti-Procrastination Habit*. Sometimes, the advice in these pages requires you to complete one-time, simple actions. Other times, I recommend building habits that help you fight procrastination on an ongoing basis. And occasionally, I've asked you to make the proactive decision to eliminate what's not working in your life.

Put simply: **The Anti-Procrastination Habit** requires a bit of hard work on your part.

The challenge is knowing how to get started.

So, in this final step, I'll wrap up all you've learned with a step-by-step plan that you can use to forever eliminate your procrastination tendencies.

This step is broken down into **four core activities** that need to be completed:

1. The one-time actions that will set up the framework of identifying what's important in your life and what's not.
2. How to schedule a weekly review session that helps you laser-focus on what needs to be accomplished in the next seven days.
3. A 13-step action plan of how to fight procrastination daily using my habit-stacking concept.
4. Practices you can use to fight procrastination whenever you feel the urge to put off an important task.

Yes, most of the concepts discussed in this step have been covered in previous sections, but what you'll get in the following step is a simplified version of how to turn the information you've learned into a solid action plan.



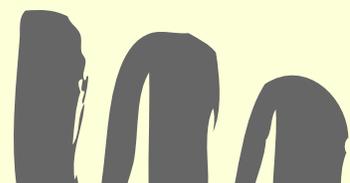


Activity #1: Complete Four One-Time Exercises

An effective way to break the cycle of procrastination is to clearly understand your immediate priorities. As we've discussed, one of the primary reasons people procrastinate is they often feel overwhelmed by an avalanche of personal and professional responsibilities.

You can fight that feeling of overwhelm by completing four one-time exercises:

- 1. Write down your current commitments and any activities you'd like to do in the next year.** Put this list in an app like Evernote or journal that's nearby always. (Time required: 30–60 minutes.)
- 2. Identify your core values and goals that are important to you.** These should relate to activities that make you happy, the experiences where you feel the most alive, and the people that enrich your life. Use value words that act as a reminder of why they are important. (Time required: 30–60 minutes.)
- 3. Identify your five core projects by jotting down 25 projects or activities that you could focus on in the next year.** Then narrow down this list until you pick just five projects. Commit to these five activities for the next quarter and say no to anything else that conflicts with these goals. (Time required: 30–60 minutes.)
- 4. Set a S.M.A.R.T. goal for every three months for each of the five core projects.** Each goal should have a specific outcome and a deadline of when you will achieve them. Use these goals as a guideline whenever you feel stuck or if you're wondering how a task fits into your quarterly plan. (Time required: 30 minutes.)





Activity #2: Schedule a Weekly Planning Session

Your weekly schedule will become your greatest defense against procrastination and that feeling of overwhelm caused by daily tasks. Not only does the weekly review give you a bird's-eye view of all the tasks that need to be completed but it also provides a realistic look at how much time you actually have every seven days.

To implement this activity, you need to schedule a 60-minute session every week (preferably on a Friday or Sunday). During this block of time, you'll complete five actions:

Action #1: Answer Three Questions

Determine what deserves your attention by answering three basic questions:

1. What are my personal obligations?
2. What are my priority projects?
3. How much time do I have this week?

Action #2: Apply the 80/20 Rule to Your Schedule

Apply the 80/20 Rule by scheduling as much time as possible for the actions that have the biggest impact on your professional and personal life. Be sure to schedule these before anything else.

Action #3: Block Out Time on a Calendar

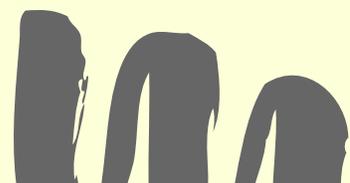
Block out time on a calendar by scheduling time for your priority tasks, personal hobbies, and flex time to reflect on new opportunities (or emergencies) that pop up during the week.

Action #4: Practice Batching and Create "Theme Days"

Practice batching by grouping similar tasks together at a specific time or on a theme day in which you accomplish a batch of tasks.

Action #5: Set Aside Time for Deep Work

Set aside time for Deep Work, in which you eliminate all distractions and completely focus on an activity that requires deep concentration.





Activity #3: Build an Anti-Procrastination Habit-Stacking Routine

Procrastination can be a daily struggle. Even if you have the perfect schedule full of activities that you know you're supposed to do, sometimes it's hard to force yourself to take that first step on a challenging task. That's why I recommend building a series of actions into your day using my concept of habit stacking, which I cover in my book of the same name.

The habit-stacking concept is built on the premise that it's hard to add multiple new habits to your daily routine. So, instead of trying to remember them all, I recommend grouping small habits together into a routine and then completing this routine at a specific time each day. You can do all this with a simple 13-step process.

*For detailed instructions on each step, I recommend checking out an overview of habit stacking in the article **"13 Steps to Building a Habit Stacking Routine,"** which appears on my blog.*

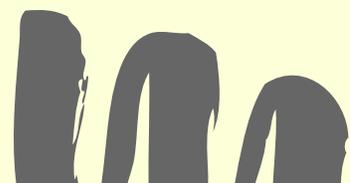
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For our purposes in this book, however, I describe the 13 steps in an abbreviated form:

1. Identify an area of your life you'd like to improve, and start with a 5-minute block of habits. This will help you create consistency by making sure that you're sticking with this new routine. Since this is a book about overcoming procrastination, I recommend picking a few of the practices that I mentioned in the previous section.

2. Focus on small wins by picking simple habits that don't require much willpower, like taking a vitamin, weighing yourself, or reviewing your goals. To simplify things, I recommend completing these habits daily:





- Start your day with a quick 5- to 10-minute review session during which you go over your tasks and appointments.
- Identify 2–3 of your most important tasks and commit to completing these before anything else.
- Get started on your hardest task first, preferably the one task that you know you're mostly likely to procrastinate on.
- Say no when it comes to any task, project, or obligation that doesn't perfectly align with the goals that you've set for yourself.
- Create a mini habit for challenging tasks by setting a "lowball" goal that makes it super simple to get started.
- Build elephant habits for ongoing projects by chipping away at them in 5- to 10-minute increments every day.
- Use the Pomodoro Technique to work in a series of sprints for large, challenging projects.
- Take action on small tasks by applying the Two-Minute Rule and single-handling most of your daily tasks.

3. Pick a time, location, or combination of both for when you'll complete the anti-procrastination habit stack. Ideally, I recommend completing this routine to start the day because it will set the tone for what you accomplish and how you address those random emergencies.

4. Anchor your stack to a trigger, which is an existing habit you automatically do every day, like showering, brushing your teeth, checking your phone, going to the refrigerator, or sitting down at your desk. This is important because you need to be 100% certain that you won't miss this trigger.

5. Create a logical checklist, which should include the sequence of the actions, how long it takes to complete each item, and where you'll do them.

6. Be accountable by using an app like Coach.me to track your progress and frequently talking to an accountability partner with whom you share your breakthroughs, challenges, and future plans.





7. Create small, enjoyable rewards that help you stick with this routine and hit important milestones. These rewards can include watching your favorite TV show, eating a healthy snack, or relaxing for a few minutes.

8. Focus on repetition by never missing a day. In fact, it's crucial that you stick to the routine—even if you need to skip one or two habits. Consistency is more important than anything else.

9. Avoid breaking the chain by eliminating any excuse for missing a day. Create a doable daily goal that can be achieved no matter what happens, and don't let yourself be talked out of it. Perhaps you'll set a small goal requiring you to only complete two or three habits. The important thing is to set a goal that can be achieved even when you have an off day.

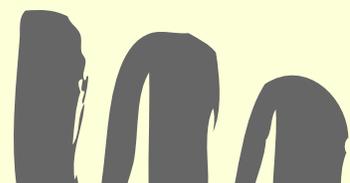
10. Expect the occasional challenge or setback. In fact, it's better if you assume they will happen and then make a plan for how you'll handle them. If you get stuck, review the six challenges that we just covered and implement the advice for your unique obstacle.

11. Schedule the frequency of a stack by committing to this routine as a daily, weekly, or monthly series of actions. My suggestion is to get started with a simple daily routine, but when you want to build more habits, add a weekly or monthly task.

12. Scale-up your stack by adding more habits and increasing the total time of the routine. But be very cautious with this step. If you notice that it's getting progressively harder to get started (i.e., you're procrastinating), then either reduce the number of habits or ask yourself why you want to skip a day. The more you understand about your lack of motivation, the easier it will be to overcome it.

13. Build one routine at a time, because each new routine increases the difficulty of sticking with your current habits. Only when you feel that a stack has become a permanent behavior should you consider adding a new routine.

That's it—thirteen steps to build a stack that will help you overcome the daily challenge of procrastination. I won't lie and say it'll be easy 100% of the time, but if you stick to these steps, then you can overcome any challenge that comes your way.



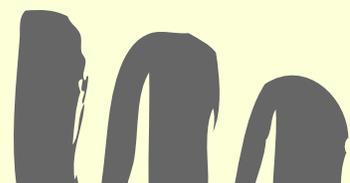


Activity #4: Challenge Your Daily Procrastination Tendencies

Even the most productive people occasionally struggle with the urge to skip certain tasks. This is especially true if you're not looking forward to something.

That's why I recommend using the following six practices whenever you feel that day-to-day urge to procrastinate:

- 1. Set aside five minutes to evaluate any potential emergency that pops up during your day.** Think of the worst-case scenario if you ignore it. If there's even a small chance that it could have a disastrous outcome, then drop what you're doing and take the first step to resolve the issue.
- 2. Use the Eisenhower Matrix to make quick decisions about every new request for your time.** Get in the practice of evaluating all your tasks using the matrix's four quadrants, which will help you recognize what's truly important for your personal and professional life.
- 3. Build the discomfort habit** if you keep putting off challenging tasks because they're not as enjoyable as your hobbies or the other ways you pass time.
- 4. Use the awareness habit** to identify the signs of when you're about to procrastinate on a task. Keep track of the times you do this daily, so you can recognize what triggers your desire to put off certain activities.
- 5. Use temptation bundling** to create rules where you're allowed to engage in an enjoyable experience only when you complete an action that benefits you in the long term.





6. **Attach all tasks to a goal** by making a list of your personal and professional responsibilities, then connecting each to an important value or goal.

There you have it—four activities that can help you turn all the information you’ve learned into a simple action plan. I challenge you to set aside 30–60 minutes each day for the next week to implement the one-time tasks. After that, I urge you to build the habits that I just mentioned into your daily routine.

If you add this framework into your life, you’ll discover that it’s not hard to face procrastination head on and take positive action on the difficult tasks in your life.



Links and Resources Mentioned:



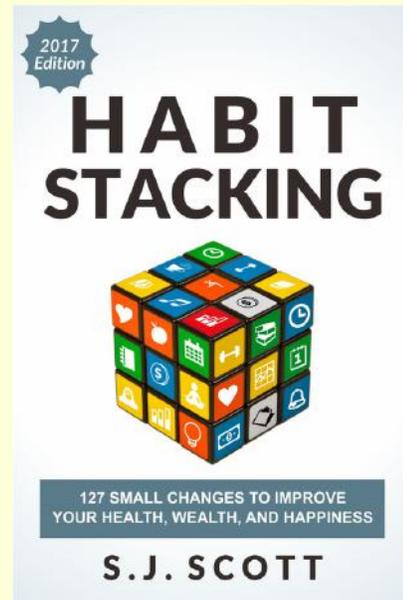
Evernote



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