

RELAXATION FOR OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION:

Procrastination is the act of putting things off. This relaxation script is for overcoming procrastination by dealing with some of the causes of this behavior and increasing motivation to deal with the things on your to do list. Begin by finding a comfortable position and allowing your body to begin to relax.

You may want to close your eyes, or focus your gaze on one spot in the room. Turn your attention inward, noticing how you are feeling right now. Notice where your body is the most tense, and take a few moments to relax these tense areas.

Take a deep breath in, and as you breathe out, lower your shoulders into a relaxed position.

Breathe in again, and relax your hands as you exhale. Relax your legs with your next breath.

Relax your jaw as you exhale again.

Keep breathing slowly and calmly, letting your body relax a bit more with each breath out.

Release tension each time you exhale...feeling your body sinking...relaxing...becoming loose...
(Pause)

Now let's talk about overcoming procrastination. The first step in overcoming procrastination is to examine the behavior. Think about some of the things you have been putting off. Now focus on just one of these tasks, and think about the reasons for your procrastination. Why have you been putting this task off? (Pause)

There are a number of possible reasons you have been procrastinating. Here are some possibilities: Perhaps you have been putting off this task because it is something you do not enjoy doing. Maybe there are other activities that you choose to do first, and the task you procrastinate is not a priority.

Maybe you fear failure.

Perhaps you put off even beginning the task because you want to do it perfectly.

Maybe the task is difficult.

You may think you do not have time to do the chore. The task could be one that will take a long time, and you put off starting because you know you cannot finish right away. Maybe you are afraid of becoming vulnerable and opening yourself up for scrutiny.

Perhaps you think the task does not absolutely have to be done yet, and you will get to it closer to the time you need to have it completed.

Do any of these reasons apply to you? Or maybe there are other reasons you have been procrastinating.

For the next step in overcoming procrastination, now let's look at the results of procrastination.

Think about the tasks that you tend to put off...the habits you have surrounding procrastination. What are the results of this procrastination? How does the act of putting things off impact your life?

(Pause)

Most of the time, people find that putting things off simply increases stress. The task is even more difficult to do than it would have been if it was completed right away, and all the time the task is being put off, it causes stress. By doing the chore right away, the stress goes away. By putting it off, the stress remains until the task is done.

Somehow, even though we know that procrastination causes stress, decreases performance, and makes us feel worse...we still continue to put things off. The causes of procrastination somehow

seem more important than the costs. Overcoming procrastination is challenging. Overcoming procrastination may be difficult, but it is possible. Overcoming procrastination may be easier than you think! Overcoming procrastination is possible by addressing the causes of procrastination...the reasons we procrastinate. Looking at all the costs of this behavior and its negative effects are not enough. Let's look again at the causes of procrastination...perfectionism...conflicting priorities...vulnerability...chores we do not enjoy...these things can be overcome. Overcoming procrastination is possible. Overcoming procrastination is something you can achieve. Imagine a task that you have been putting off. Think of one specific thing that you have been meaning to do, but somehow just seem to keep procrastinating.

Notice the thoughts you are having as you think about this task. All the reasons you have been putting it off...all the excuses...the explanations... Now think about the reasons to do the task right away...reasons to do the task within the next 24 hours.

Which reasons are more compelling? The reasons to do the task, or the reasons not to? If there are more reasons not to do the task, perhaps it needs to be removed from your list of things to do. If there are more reasons to do the task, then the following affirmations can help with overcoming procrastination: I have been putting off this task, and I am aware of the reasons I have been procrastinating, but I know this behavior only hurts me. When faced with doing things I do not enjoy, I will begin them right away, and then reward myself afterward by doing things I enjoy more. I can eliminate tasks that are not important, and spend my time on the things that matter. I will not leave unimportant things on my to do list to cause stress.

I can choose how to spend my time. I do have time to get the important things finished, as long as I don't let other things take up this time. I spend my time on what matters. I know that procrastination only wastes time. I don't have time to procrastinate.

I can start a task, even if there is a possibility I may not complete it successfully. Putting the task off because I fear failure sets me up for certain failure, but if I try, I have a chance of success.

Putting off difficult tasks only makes them more difficult. I am capable of completing this. I will feel better if I get started. I do not need to get this all finished at once. Starting is worthwhile even if I cannot get finished just yet. When I get started, I am further ahead than I was before. I can break this down into small steps if I need to, instead of seeing it as one insurmountable task. I can finish this, but only if I get started right now.

Waiting to do a task and putting it off do not help me get ready to do the task perfectly, it only makes me stressed. I perform less well when stressed, and if I want to do my best, I need to complete things right away.

I do not have to do things perfectly. Nothing is perfect. I can make my best effort, and that is enough. It's okay to do things imperfectly. In fact, doing things imperfectly is the only way to do them. I can plan for imperfection, and that is alright. Sometimes it seems easier to not even take things on because I feel vulnerable when I do. I allow myself to fear the criticism of others so much that I hold myself back. I have the confidence to risk. I do not need to fear the consequences of trying, because I know that the results of trying are going to be better than the results of procrastinating. Putting things off is not helping me or protecting me from scrutiny. Making a sincere effort is all I can be expected to do, and it is enough.

Even if I do not absolutely have to get the task finished yet, I know that the entire time between now and when the task is complete, it will be on my mind. When I'm finished the task, I will be free from it. I'll feel better if I get to it now instead of leaving it for later.

I will do the things I have been putting off, and I know I will feel much better when I do.
(Pause)

Now that you have repeated these affirmations for overcoming procrastination, just relax for a few moments, letting the ideas sink in. (Pause) Simply rest...relax... (Pause)

Continue to relax while I talk for a few moments. Think of one thing you have been putting off. You know what you need to do. You need to begin this task within the next 24 hours. The only way to overcome procrastination is to take action. You can take action right now. You are ready to take charge, and get rid of the stress, get rid of the worry that has been hanging over you...you are ready to approach this task with confidence. Imagine what it is you need to do. Picture yourself doing this task. See yourself doing the task with confidence...free from perfectionism...free from worry about becoming vulnerable...free from the need to do things perfectly...free from fear of scrutiny...completing the task and getting it out of the way. See yourself starting and completing this task... Imagine how good you will feel when you are done. Imagine rewarding yourself by doing something easy and enjoyable when you have completed the difficult task.

If the task is a large one, it's okay to take some time to complete it...but you need to get started right away. Large tasks can be done in small pieces. Imagine yourself completing a large task, piece by piece. See yourself starting the large project...and doing part of it. Imagine how great it feels to get started. See yourself starting the task, feeling proud of yourself for taking that step. Envision yourself completing projects bit by bit...working away until they are finished.

Imagine how good you will feel to have started a difficult task. See yourself working through the chore confidently...feeling good about your efforts...free from vulnerability...knowing that your efforts are good enough, just as they are...

Allow yourself to be filled with feelings of accomplishment and confidence. Imagine how good you will feel when you have finished the task...successful in overcoming procrastination... Even if the task was not enjoyable, imagine how great it feels to be done. Finished!

Picture yourself as a person who always completes tasks on time, who gets started quickly and finishes tasks soon. Imagine that you are confident, and enjoy taking on various projects. Imagine that you get started immediately, without putting anything off. Create a picture of yourself as this person. (Pause)

Allow yourself to experience the feelings you would have if you were this person who always completes things promptly. Imagine how good and successful you will feel, even if you do not do things perfectly...even if there are some tasks that do not go well or do not get done successfully...see yourself feeling good about your efforts...easily getting started on projects...eagerly jumping in... Create all the details of what this would be like. (Pause)

You are this person. You have every ability to be this person...it feels great to allow this person to shine through...to let yourself do the things that you need to do without holding yourself back... Let yourself fully embrace this positive behavior...overcoming procrastination...overcoming procrastination for good... (Pause)

Think again about the task you have been putting off. How would the person you have been imagining handle this task? Remember that you are this person. Allow yourself to do what you need to do. When do you need to get started on this task? You know the answer. You need to get started right away. Preferably as soon as you are finished this exercise...or if that is not a possibility, within the next 24 hours. You do not need to do the whole task all at once, but you need to at least begin, or take up where you left off before. Choosing a date in the future when you will do the task is not enough. You need to do at least a part of the task NOW. You can go

ahead and do the task right away, and feel great about doing so. Now that you have completed this relaxation exercise, give yourself a few moments to reawaken and get reoriented to your surroundings. Stretch if you want to...allowing your body to reawaken. Open your eyes and look around, returning to full alertness. When you are completely awake and alert you can proceed with your day. Get started right now!

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