



# Procrastination **BUSTER!**

## Quick Tips for Quitting the “Do-It-Later” HABIT

### 1. Stop Listening To The Voices Inside Your Head

It’s amazing how many “important” things will begin to occur to you, once it’s time to begin working. These will sound like thoughts to you, but they are really the voice of the procrastination monster. It will sound like this: “As soon as I’m done checking email, I’ll start working on it – ten more minutes won’t make a big difference.” In the moment, it may give you immediate gratification and some temporary stress relief, but rest assured: **It won’t make the task you’re putting off go away.**

If we listen to the voices, we will eventually find other things to do first, like sort the sock drawer or quick-check Facebook, which we all know is impossible, because 5 minutes on Facebook ALWAYS turns out to be an hour on Facebook.



So the next time the voice in your head tells you to see if anyone has responded to your email or Facebook post, instead of doing it, tell it “**NO!**” Or, pull out a notepad (not your phone) and jot down a reminder to do it later, along with a date and time. As you turn back to your task at hand, you’ll see the urge to delay will pass pretty quickly and you can get on with the important things.

### 2. Commit Yourself To A “DIRTY 30”

Try this: Commit to spending the first 30 minutes of your day working on that project or task. You know which one I’m talking about: the one that you (deep down) would rather **not** do.



Don’t check your email. Don’t look at your social media feeds. Just sit down and start working. If you do this and get a good work rhythm going, you will likely find out that it is much easier to ignore distractions. If 30 minutes is too tough to do, try 10 minutes instead, then gradually work your way up to 30 minutes. The goal is to get wrapped up in **work** and not distractions.

After you’ve been working for 30 minutes, then you reward yourself with a break, stop and check your email. When you do, you may only look at what’s important and not every single email because you’ll be motivated to get back to work and pick up where you left off.

### 3. Change Your Environment

It's no secret that different environments can have different impact on our productivity. Take a look at your work desk and your room/office. Do they make you want to work? Do they make you want to snuggle and sleep? Or worse - do they make you want to tiptoe out, close the door and run away? If it's the latter, you should look into changing your workspace.



Some ways to do that are by decluttering to bring neatness and order to your space. Bring in a fun, decorative coffee mug. Try adding some pictures or inspirational quotes. A fresh, vibrant, new coat of paint couldn't hurt either.

One thing to keep in mind is that an environment that makes us feel inspired before may lose its effect after a period of time. When and if that happens, then it's time to change things around again. Set your environment up so that it propels you, not repels you.

### 4. Use the 80/20 Rule

This tip is particularly useful for those of you who are perfectionists. 80/20 refers to the phenomenon where 80% of the outputs (the outcome that is produced) results from 20% of efforts. The remaining 20% of the output can only be achieved by putting in 80% effort.



So let's say you have a report due, and to produce the absolute best report you are capable of, you need about 100 hours. 80/20 rule says that you can get 80% of the quality in by spending 20 hours (20% of 100 hours). On the other hand, the finishing touches to boost this report from a 80% to 100% quality requires you to spend 80 hours (80% of the time). When you're deciding what to do with your precious time, it doesn't make sense to go for that last 20%, right? You don't really get a good bang for the buck.

The 80/20 Rule encourages you to forget the little details that no one but you notices. You can keep revising something until the end of time, but that time is probably better spent working on a new task. The key is to focus your energy on producing the 80% of every thing you do – which is also the 80% that *matters*. Draw a mental cut off limit and, most importantly, **HOLD YOURSELF TO IT.**

## 5. Blackmail Yourself

Merriam-Webster defines blackmail as: “extortion or coercion by threats of public exposure or criminal prosecution.” This sounds intense, but blackmailing yourself into getting tasks done is a creative way to make procrastination a thing of the past.



Here's how it works:

**Pick a challenge:** Make it specific and give it a deadline. For example: “Work out for an hour, five days a week” or “Write 1000 words every week for a month.”

**Find someone to blackmail you.** The blackmailer you choose will hold you accountable throughout the duration of the challenge. This should be someone who will check in on you daily and won't tolerate excuses.

**Make the deal.** Decide what the consequences will be if you fail to accomplish the goal (this should be fun for the blackmailer, but scary for you.) Here's an example: “If I don't [insert task] by [specific date], I will [some extreme action that you really, really dislike,]” or “If I don't complete my workouts this month, I will give Jeanette my rent money.”

You might say “WHAT?! I can't afford that!!”

That's the point.

The deal should be costly enough that you have to complete the task. There's no shortage of options here. You can blackmail yourself with whatever uncomfortable consequence your mind can think of.

The key is to pick a blackmailer that will actually hold you accountable and follow through on the deal if you fail.

*Give these steps a try when you feel the procrastination monster lurking over your shoulder. Everyone is different - some tactics may work well for you while others may not. The key is to keep trying and stick with it. It gets easier as you go along!*

