



Breaking the Habit of Procrastination Transitions Worksheet



Every day, we engage in hundreds of activities and little jobs. Every time we switch from one task to another, there is a period of lag time between what we've been doing and what we're about to do.

This lag time is a transition period between tasks, and it's where procrastination is most likely to rear its ugly head.

The reason for this lag time is because the brain is still processing unfinished thoughts and activities. Until we can close those open loops and complete the thought process, we will be unable to focus on the next task.

For example: think about when you're reading a book and you stumble over a mistake or a word you don't recognize — you go on reading, but you're not absorbing the content of the written words. Until your brain can let go of the stumbling block, your mind will go on worrying at the problem. It's an open loop.

Procrastination resulting from your transition times between tasks is the same thing. We need to complete the thinking process and close out the session before we can start a new task.



The way to do it is to keep a daily journal of your activities — a **Done List**.

This worksheet can help you to begin the procrastination recognition process. When you start to recognize your moments of procrastination, you can begin to change your behaviour and overcome your mental misinformation.

1. Set up a notebook or timesheet so you can keep track of all the different tasks, chores, jobs, hobbies, meetings, phone calls, travelling, television, reading, writing, recreation and playtime, naps, family time and anything that requires a change in mental direction from what you were doing previously. Every time you reach the end of each different task, or have to switch direction, write down what you did. Include what you think about what you've just done and how you feel about it.

2. Commit to doing this exercise for a week. When you honestly commit to changing your avoidance habit, this process will show you a great deal of valuable information:

- You'll learn to recognize the transitional moments when you're most vulnerable to procrastination.
- You'll learn to judge how much time a task actually takes, instead of how much you think it takes.
- This will allow you to make better decisions when you plan and schedule future work.
- Because you recognize the moments when you're most likely to procrastinate, you can anticipate them and make different, better choices.
- You can learn to implement better, more intentional behaviours.
- You gain clarity, focus and a clear plan or roadmap for your goal-setting.
- You can develop a new anti-procrastination habit.

When you know your most vulnerable moments, those times you succumb to procrastination, make a commitment to choosing the more effective behaviour. Once you know when you're procrastinating, it can become a conscious choice. There will be times when you tell yourself it's okay to goof off for a bit. Just don't let it become a habit. Don't let it become your default once again. Commit to taking action on your goals and you *will* achieve them.

The only way to gain clarity and focus is to do the work. Thinking about it is merely dreaming. Doing it is what makes it happen.



Procrastination-Busting 101

Transitions Worksheet



Step 1. Note the time, so you can keep accurate track of the time spent working and the time spent doing other things. **Example:** 10.07 a.m.

Step 2. Take the time to describe your answers in complete sentences. One-word conclusions don't close out the thought. Ask yourself these questions:

- What task or project did I just finish?

Example: *I've just completed the first draft of my blog post. It's a long way from done, but I think I have the salient points covered. I feel good about it — satisfied with the work so far.*

- Are there any parts of that work that I'm still thinking about? (Describe it.)

Example: *It's at a place I can take it up next time. I need to work out some detail points about benefits of doing the exercise.*

Step 3. Next, give an overall view. Knowing your purpose attaches specific value to the task at hand. Answer these questions:

- What is the purpose of this work?
- Why am I doing it?

Example: *This is important fundamental work to breaking through writer's block and procrastination. I've learned how to do it and I think it's a valuable skill I can teach others.*

Step 4. Make a list of possible ways to accomplish the goal, and then choose the best one. Answer these questions:

- *How should I approach getting the project done?*
- *What's the best solution?*

Example: Create blog post and attach a download worksheet. *Do a live video with questions, Record a video for YouTube. Teach it to my in-person class.*

Step 5. Next, break it down. Ask:

- *What is the first tiny action of the project I'm about to start?*
- *What is the second action?*

Example: Start my computer and open Scrivener. Then, copy blog post outline and fill in the blanks with the main points I want to cover.

The hardest part of overcoming procrastination is starting. The next hardest part is staying focused. When you track what keeps you from staying focused, it becomes easier to recognize it the next time it happens. Eventually, you'll recognize that you're procrastinating almost as soon as it happens. When it does, make a conscious choice and ask yourself these questions:

- Do I keep procrastinating or not?
- What do I gain if I do?
- What do I lose?
- How will I feel about myself in the short term?
- How will I feel about myself in the long term?
- Is procrastinating on this task worth it?

And that's it. That's all there is to it.

If you do this exercise for a week, it should be long enough to establish a habit in your mind — recognition of transitions, recognizing procrastination and making more productive and effective choices. At the very least it will give you information regarding your own ability to assess timelines, and that's a valuable skill on its own.

Procrastination is a habit. Build new habits and you can build a new life.