

- 1 List the advantages and disadvantages of procrastinating from the task.** Draw up two columns on a sheet of paper and list the advantages and disadvantages. Remember, procrastination has many advantages: it's easy, you don't have to face the possibility of failure, you can do something else more pleasurable. It is important to recognise the advantages, as they may be too good to give up. Weigh the advantages against the disadvantages. You may learn that the task is just not right for you (see Exercise).

- 2 Just do it.** Your expectations are usually worse than reality. Like getting into the cold swimming pool, it is better to just jump in.

- 3 Plan it.** Put it in your diary, or on your 'to do' list. Make it part of your routine rather than having to think about it. Start the day with your least pleasant task, then the day gets better. Decide on a specific time to get started.

- 4 Break the task up into smaller parts.** If the task is overwhelming, do it a piece at a time. For example, just plan to do 15 minutes worth of work, often the sense of achievement will motivate you to do more. Mix the task up with more pleasurable activities and carry it out little and often.

- 5 Think differently.** Challenge distorted thinking such as 'awfulising', 'black and white thinking', and 'jumping to conclusions'. Concentrate on how good you will feel when you have done it. Lower your expectations. Aim to do an adequate, rather than a brilliant, job.

- 6 Plan rewards and reinforcements.** Reward yourself something once you have done the dreaded deed. If it doesn't work out as well as you hoped, view the experience as valuable learning.

- 7 Set deadlines and work towards them.** Say to yourself, 'I will have this done before the end of the week, or the end of the year'.

■ **Exercise**

What do you procrastinate over? Write out a list of the tasks that you put off, from your home, work, and personal life. Select one of those tasks and write down a list of the things you say to yourself when you are putting it off. See how your reasons correspond to the list above. Using the strategies above try to carry that task out now.

Write down what you're putting off _____ _____	
Write down the advantages and disadvantages of putting it off	
Advantages	Disadvantages
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6