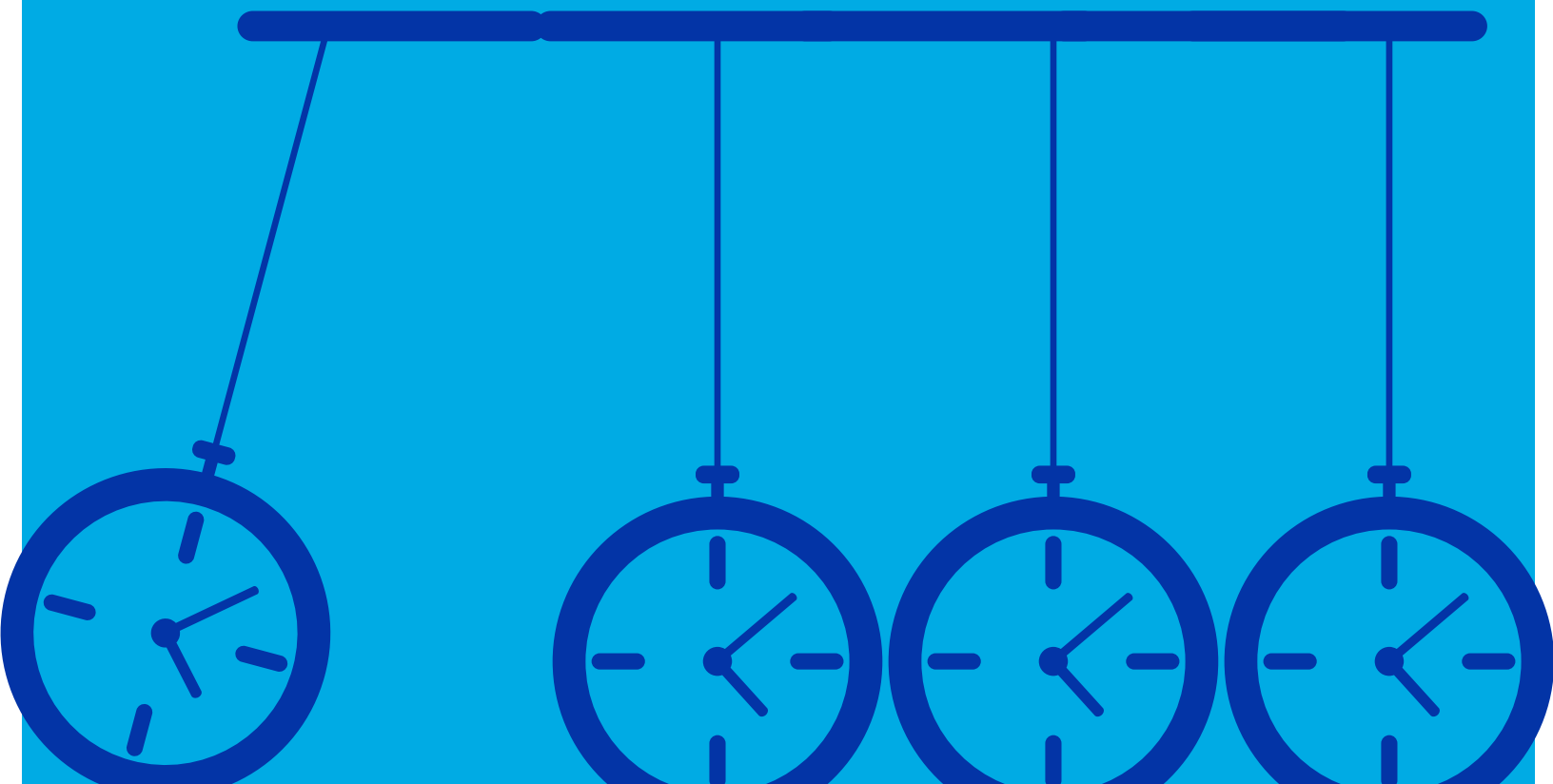




HOW TO STOP PROCRASTINATING

A Scientific Guide on How to Stop Procrastinating

Adapted from: "Procrastination: A Scientific Guide on How to Stop Procrastinating by James Clear" for Tecnológico de Monterrey.



The science behind procrastination

Let's start by getting the basics nailed down. What is procrastination? What does procrastination mean? What exactly are we dealing with here?

Why do we procrastinate? What is going on in the brain that causes us to avoid the things we know we should be doing?

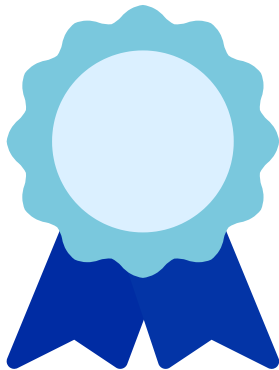
This is a good time to bring some science into our discussion. Behavioral psychology research has revealed a phenomenon called “time inconsistency,” which helps explain why procrastination seems to pull us in despite our good intentions. Time inconsistency refers to the tendency of the human brain to value immediate rewards more highly than future rewards.

The best way to understand this is by imagining that you have two selves: your Present Self and your Future Self. When you set goals for yourself — like losing weight or writing a book or learning a language — you are actually making plans for your Future Self. You are envisioning what you want your life to be like in the future.

"The Future Self can set goals, only the Present Self can take action".

This is one reason why you might go to bed feeling motivated to make a change in your life, but when you wake up you find yourself falling back into old patterns. Your brain values long-term benefits when they are in the future (tomorrow), but it values immediate gratification when it comes to the present moment (today).

How to stop procrastinating right now



1

Make the rewards of taking action more immediate

One of the best ways to bring future rewards into the present moment is with a strategy known as temptation bundling.

The basic format is: Only do [THING YOU LOVE] while doing [THING YOU PROCRASTINATE ON].

Here are a few common examples of temptation bundling:

- Only listen to audiobooks or podcasts you love while exercising.
- Only get a pedicure while processing overdue work emails.
- Only watch your favorite show while ironing or doing household chores.



2

Make the consequences of procrastination more immediate

If you can find a way to make the benefits of your long-term choices more attractive than your short-term choices, it will be easier to avoid procrastination.

For example, if you commit to working out with a friend at 7 a.m. next Monday, then the cost of skipping your workout becomes more immediate. Miss this one workout and you look like a jerk.



3

Design your future actions

One of the favorite tools psychologists use to overcome procrastination is called a “commitment device.”

For example, you can curb your future eating habits by purchasing food in individual packages rather than in the bulk size. You can stop wasting time on your phone by deleting games or social media apps. Don't forget that on the TQueremos Site, you can go to the [various dimensions](#) to learn more about yourself and better plan your future actions.



4

Make the task More achievable

The cost of procrastinating on exercise only becomes painful after weeks and months of lazy behavior.

“When you start a new habit, it should take less than two minutes to do.”
The idea is to make it as easy as possible to get started.



5

Be consistent: how to kick the procrastination habit

One reason it is so easy to slip back into procrastination time after time is because we don't have a clear system for deciding what is important and what we should work on first.

Having a clear method will help you work quickly and without much thought, it forces you to make a decision and take action and removes the friction of getting started.

More tips and methods.

The Ivy Lee Method

Ivy Lee explains his simple daily routine for achieving peak productivity:

Here are the six steps of the method:



At the end of each work day, write down the six most important things you need to accomplish tomorrow.



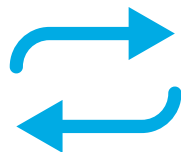
Prioritize those six items in order of their true importance.



When you arrive tomorrow, concentrate only on the first task. Work until the first task is finished before moving on to the second task.



Approach the rest of your list in the same fashion.



Repeat this process every working day.

If you require more support, remember that you can always go to the [Emotional Counseling area of your campus](#), contact your Peer Mentors and tutors. Also remember that you can call the national line TQueremos 800 813 9500, which is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Use visual cues!

Avoid Chronic Procrastination

A visual cue is something you can see (a visual reminder) that prompts you to take action.

Visual cues...



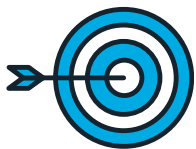
remind you to start a behavior.

Visual stimulus can be so useful. It is much easier to stick with good habits when your environment nudges you in the right direction.



display your progress on a behavior.

Having a visual cue—like a calendar that tracks your progress—avoids that pitfall because it is a built-in measuring system.



can have an additive effect on motivation.

The more visual progress you see, the more motivated you will become to finish the task.

Keep reading and learning!

Scan this code and find additional resources on the TQueremos Site.

