

# Multitasking & Procrastination



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## **Multitasking**

Many of us were raised to believe that being able to multitask is something to be admired and a necessary skill in the workplace. Science however suggests otherwise. We are not truly able to focus on more than one thing at a time. With that said it doesn't mean that not being able to multitask will impede crossing things off your to-do list. Set certain times throughout the day for specific tasks. The vast majority, if not all of us would admit that we check our emails throughout the day and respond to them accordingly. Taking time away from projects that you are working on to answer a simple email will pile up. It is better if you set certain times to check your email and respond to them in chunks. Maybe you set aside the last 15 minutes of each hour to answer as many emails as you can and then go back to the task you were working on. Be smart about how you spend your time and do not spread yourself too thin.

How many of you try and do your homework or other assignments while you have one of your favorite television shows on in the background? Are you thinking that you won't have to watch it later if you do both at the same time? Most of us can agree that it's not the best thing to be doing. Because you are not devoting 100% of your attention to the reading you are not completely absorbing the information and will most likely have to reread it again thus taking up twice as much time as it should have taken initially. Take a look at [this study](#) that was conducted by Stanford University which shows that people who are "heavy multitaskers" are unable to filter out irrelevant information.

## **Procrastination**

Everyone has a rational decision maker within their mind. What sets procrastinators apart from those who are skilled in time management is that the former have instant gratification monkeys who often take over. This results in going down a YouTube dark hole and not getting anything done. These instant gratification monkey's only live in the present and want to have fun. Non procrastinators have developed a Panic monster to scare away the instant gratification monkey and stay focused.

There are two types of procrastination. The first is the one with deadlines and therefore the effects of procrastination are contained. The second is the kind with no deadline. The panic monster never shows up in that case. This long term procrastination is more dangerous and causes unhappiness. Is there such a thing as a non-procrastinator though? If you are not suffering the effects of the first kind of procrastination then you more likely than not are suffering from the second form in which there are no deadlines. You might be thinking that you work better under pressure. In fact you may have written a 20 page paper the night before it was due and got an “A”. You got lucky that one time and chances are you will not continue getting such good grades on large assignments you start and finish the night before. The quality of your work will never be as good as if you started it ahead of time.

Rather than waiting for the pressure of a deadline to light a fire under you, pressure yourself to meet certain time sensitive goals leading up to completing the assignment. For example, goals might include researching, creating an outline, getting a certain number of pages done so on and so forth. Set deadlines for each goal. Goal #1 is due on Monday, goal 2 is due Wednesday, final goal due next Friday. This theory on procrastination was developed by Tim Urban and is further explained in his TED Talk. The link to the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arj7oStGLkU>