



# OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION

## PROCRASTINATION DEFINED

Procrastination is the habit of putting off or delaying work that needs to be done. **This often happens when we struggle to sit with an emotion that is difficult or uncomfortable. In other words, we procrastinate to cope with the negative feelings that we face when working on a specific task.**

When we are unable to bear the stressors of our responsibilities, it is often our innate reaction to avoid the stressor so that we can feel less overwhelmed. Even though the avoidance can bring temporary relief, it inevitably increases stress over the long-term, since the act of completing the task still needs to be done.

Procrastination can take place in many areas of our lives—*personally, socially, academically, financially, spiritually, professionally*, and so on. In academics, procrastination occurs frequently due to the high number of responsibilities and deadlines that students inquire in school. When not managed properly, more responsibilities can lead to more stress, in which procrastination is more likely to occur.

There are multiple strategies for task initiation, but the best thing you can do to overcome procrastination is to **identify the inhibitor and create a solution to address that inhibitor**. This worksheet will walk you through the steps of reflecting on your behavior patterns, identifying your core inhibitors, and strategizing solutions for each inhibitor.

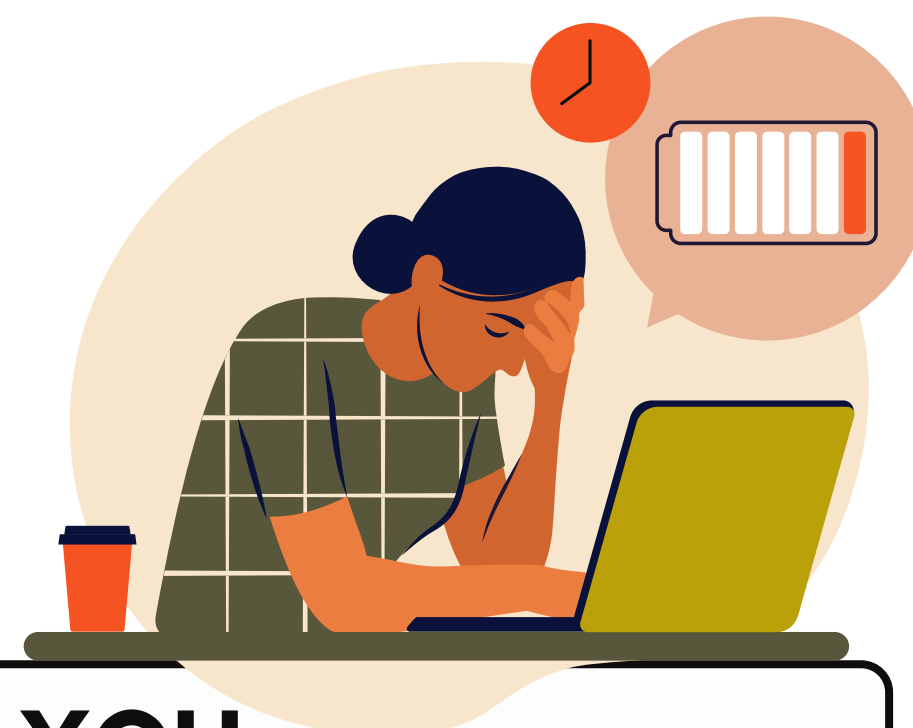
[Click here to schedule a meeting with an Academic Coach](#) so that they can support you in completing this worksheet.



# PROCRASTINATION WORKSHEET

## STEP 1: HOW DO YOU PROCRASTINATE?

Take a moment to reflect on how you procrastinate in an academic setting, and write those behaviors down below



### IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU PROCRASTINATE?

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### EXAMPLES OF PROCRASTINATION

- **Avoiding** school work until the very last minute.
- Believing that you only work well **under pressure**.
- **Underestimating** the time needed to complete an assignment
- Struggling to **initiate** tasks
- Searching for **instant gratification** (i.e. phone scrolling, socializing) when trying to do work.



# PROCRASTINATION WORKSHEET

## STEP 2: IDENTIFYING THE INHIBITOR



Great job! Being familiar with the behaviors will support you in being able to identify when you are putting off a task. Step 2 will help you to identify the main causes and triggers for your procrastination. **Procrastination can occur for a multitude of reasons in an academic-setting, in which can be categorized into three kinds of inhibitors:**

### NEED-BASED

Need-based procrastination normally takes place when a student's fundamental human needs are unmet. If a basic need is not being met, the student will eventually lack the capacity to address their academic responsibilities.



Examples of **need-based inhibitors**:

- Getting less than 8 hours of sleep
- Eating junk foods, not eating healthy foods
- Not making enough time for friends and family
- Not showering regularly
- Missing necessary medications
- Lack of physical activity
- Not making time for emotional or spiritual wellness

### WORK-BASED

Work-based procrastination occurs when a student struggles to feel motivated in completing their academic work. This type of procrastination is directly related to the student's perception of their work and classes.



Examples of **work-based inhibitors**:

- Confused about assignment details
- Intimidated by large and more time-consuming projects
- Lack of interest in subject or assignment
- Lack of time-management skills and not knowing how to plan for the completion of an assignment
- Lack of understanding of the course material (content)

### FEAR-BASED

Fear-based procrastination is normally a result of the student's personal anxieties and how they relate to their academics.

*Note: Academic Coaches are not professionally trained to help students manage their anxiety. If you find that you need support in managing your anxiety, please visit [AU's Center for Well-Being](#).*



Examples of **fear-based inhibitors**:

- Engaging in perfectionistic tendencies
- Fear of the professor's perception of your work
- Worried about your personal adequacy in relation to school
- Fear of failing
- Overall anxiety of the pressures that come with being a college student

# PROCRASTINATION WORKSHEET

## STEP 2: IDENTIFYING THE INHIBITOR (CONT.)



Reflect on the inhibitor examples from the previous page. What kinds of inhibitors do you engage in that impede on your ability to initiate your school work? Write down your reflections below.

### WHAT ARE YOUR INHIBITORS?

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# PROCRASTINATION WORKSHEET

## STEP 3: PAIR YOUR INHIBITOR WITH A SOLUTION

Awesome work on Step 2! Not many students are aware of their own personal inhibitors, so you should be proud of the work you have done thus far. **For Step 3, you will need to be creative and strategize some potential solutions for your own inhibitors.** See examples below:



INHIBITOR	TYPE	SOLUTION
I feel as though all I do is work. I have	<input type="checkbox"/> NEED-BASED	Carefully examine your schedule to remove
no time for myself or my friends, and I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK-BASED	all unnecessary obligations. Engage in a
am starting to feel burnt out.	<input type="checkbox"/> FEAR-BASED	time-blocking system to promote better
		time management.

INHIBITOR	TYPE	SOLUTION
I am worried about emailing my professor	<input type="checkbox"/> NEED-BASED	Reframe your mindset to remind yourself
about my missing assignments. What if	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK-BASED	that professors are here to help you. Be
they get mad at me, or label me as	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FEAR-BASED	forgiving of yourself and take
irresponsible? I would rather get through		accountability. Having difficult
the class unnoticed than experience		conversations with faculty is also a
potential conflict with an instructor.		great outlet to practice your
		professional communication.

PROCRASTINATION WORKSHEET

STEP 3: PAIR YOUR INHIBITOR WITH A SOLUTION (CONT.)

Keep in mind that the examples on the previous page are overly-simplified to demonstrate what a solution could look like. It is possible that there are several potential solutions to an experienced inhibitor, and that some situations are highly complex, which may involve developing a more intricate plan. **In this case, we recommend that you schedule with Academic Coaching!**



Use the space below to write out your inhibitors individually, identify the type of inhibitor, and draft a solution.

INHIBITOR	TYPE	SOLUTION
	<input type="checkbox"/> NEED-BASED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK-BASED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> FEAR-BASED	

INHIBITOR	TYPE	SOLUTION
	<input type="checkbox"/> NEED-BASED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK-BASED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> FEAR-BASED	

# PROCRASTINATION WORKSHEET

## STEP 3: PAIR YOUR INHIBITOR WITH A SOLUTION (CONT.)

Use the space below to write out your inhibitors individually, identify the type of inhibitor, and draft a solution (**continued**)

INHIBITOR	TYPE	SOLUTION
	<input type="checkbox"/> NEED-BASED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK-BASED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> FEAR-BASED	

INHIBITOR	TYPE	SOLUTION
	<input type="checkbox"/> NEED-BASED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK-BASED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> FEAR-BASED	

INHIBITOR	TYPE	SOLUTION
	<input type="checkbox"/> NEED-BASED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK-BASED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> FEAR-BASED	

# PROCRASTINATION WORKSHEET

## STEP 4: IMPLEMENT AN ACTION PLAN!

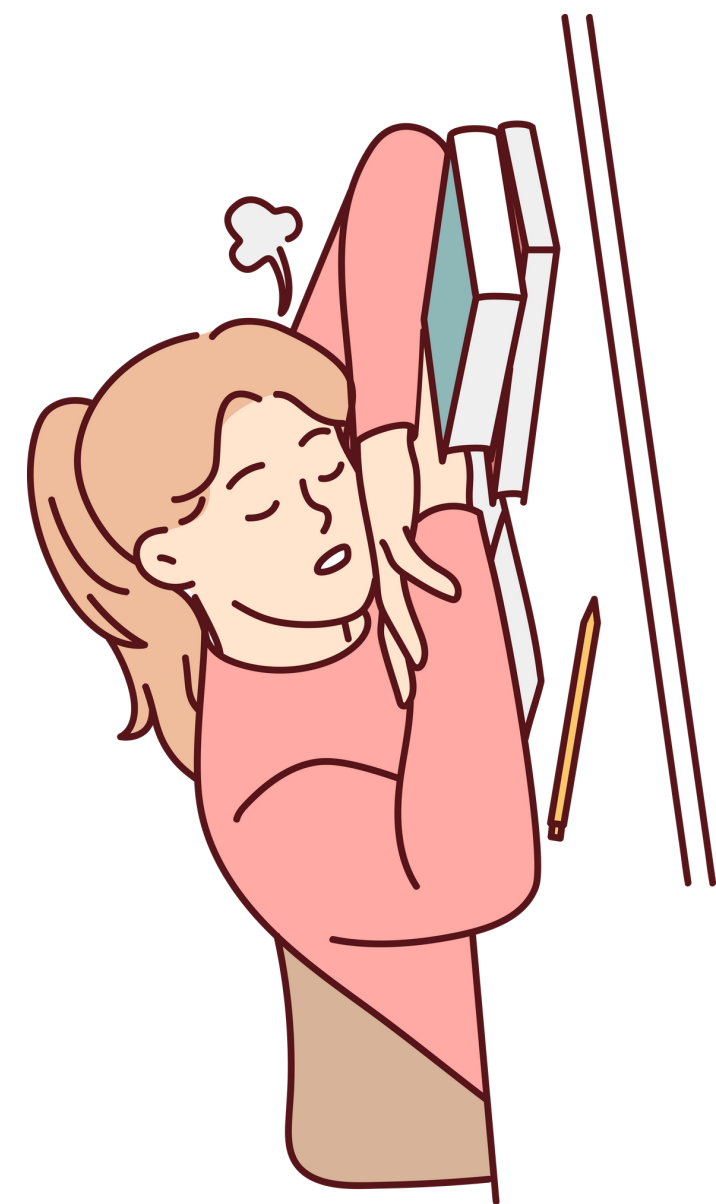


Great job! Now that you have identified your inhibitors and paired them with a solution, the final step is to create a plan-of-action for how you are going to implement your solution. It is okay to strategize multiple plans-of-action for your solutions and test them out.

INHIBITOR	TYPE	SOLUTION
I am getting on average 4 hours of sleep a night. I am way too exhausted to even think about my assignments.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEED-BASED <input type="checkbox"/> WORK-BASED <input type="checkbox"/> FEAR-BASED	Prioritize getting a minimum of 8 hours of sleep.    

### SOME EXAMPLE ACTION STEPS ARE...

- Having an earlier **bedtime** start (i.e. going to bed at 9 pm instead of 2 am).
- Engaging in **practices that help you to feel tired** before bedtime (i.e. putting your phone away an hour before sleep, exercise, meditation).
- Finding a **sleep playlist** on Spotify.
- Checking your other **wellness habits** that affect sleep, such as health and relationships.
- **Scheduling classes** that start at a later time in the day.
- Speaking to a **specialist** if necessary.

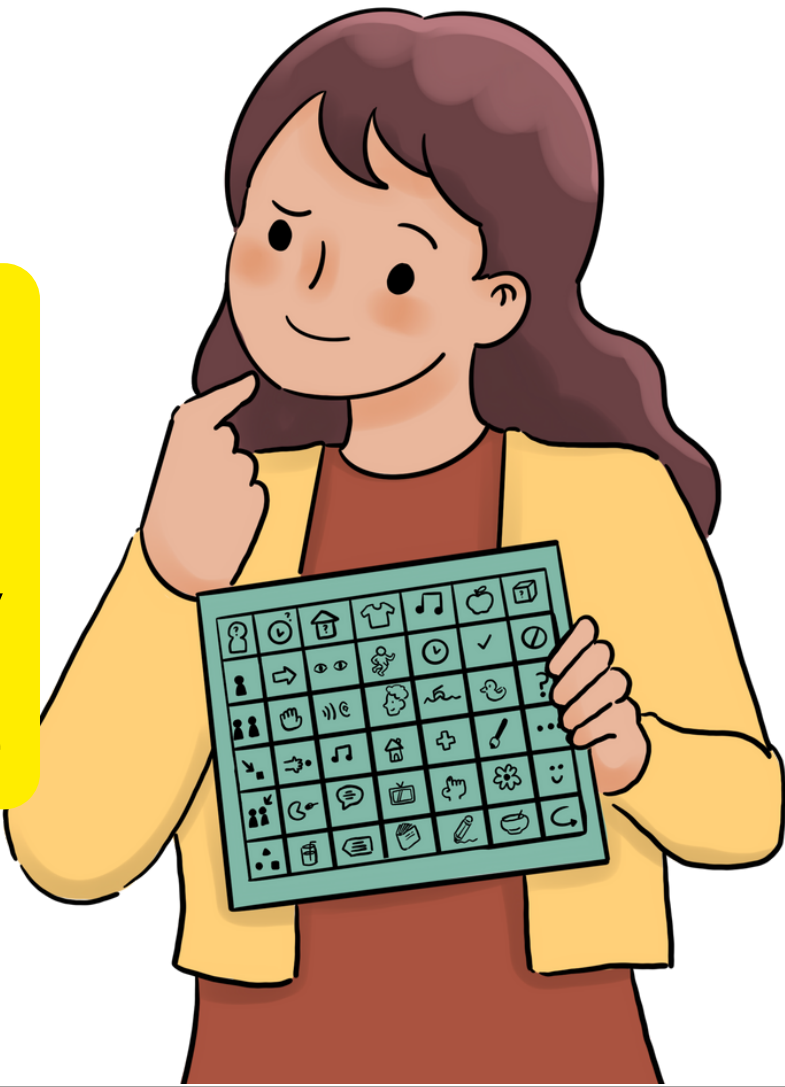




# PROCRASTINATION WORKSHEET

## STEP 4: IMPLEMENT AN ACTION PLAN!

Great job! We are finally on the last step of the Overcoming Procrastination Worksheet. Please take the space below to reflect on ways that you can make your solution more actionable.



WHAT IS YOUR ACTION PLAN?

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# OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION

## CONGRATULATIONS! YOU ARE DONE!

Great work! Once you have an action plan, make sure to follow it and adjust it as needed. Doing this on your own for the first time and turning your positive behaviors into a habit can be overwhelming and intimidating. If you are feeling this way, do not hesitate to [schedule with an academic coach](#) so that they can support you in completing this worksheet.

In addition to meeting with the Academic Coaching Team at American University, feel free to explore our [online Resource Library](#) to discover more strategies for addressing procrastination as well as other academic topics.



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Academic Support and Access Center

# PROCRASTINATION WORKSHEET

## IDENTIFYING INHIBITORS AND SOLUTIONS

INHIBITOR	TYPE	SOLUTION
	<input type="checkbox"/> NEED-BASED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK-BASED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> FEAR-BASED	

INHIBITOR	TYPE	SOLUTION
	<input type="checkbox"/> NEED-BASED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK-BASED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> FEAR-BASED	

INHIBITOR	TYPE	SOLUTION
	<input type="checkbox"/> NEED-BASED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK-BASED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> FEAR-BASED	

# PROCRASTINATION WORKSHEET

## CREATE AN ACTION PLAN!

**WHAT IS YOUR ACTION PLAN?**

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