

EXERCISE: UNDERSTANDING YOUR PROCRASTINATION CYCLE

Now that you have learned how procrastination develops and is maintained across different phases, it is time to apply the model to your own behaviour. This exercise will help you identify where in the cycle you tend to get stuck and what contributes to your procrastination, so you can begin to interrupt the pattern.

Choose a task

Think of a task or assignment that you have been putting off. It could be something you are currently avoiding or a type of task you often struggle with.

Review your procrastination cycle

Using Table 2.1, fill in which factors affect you in each phase.

Table 2.1 Review your procrastination cycle

Pre-actional: Appraisal	Actional: Execution	Avoidance: Procrastination	Post-actional: Self-evaluation
Motivation: • Confidence in success (expectancy) • Perceived importance and reward (value) • Sensitivity to delay (impulsivity) • Timing of reward or consequence (delay)	Task: • Task complexity and clarity • Perceived task value • Skill • Social influence • Cultural or contextual factors	Task avoidance: • Engaging with activities that are more immediately gratifying • Engaging in less aversive tasks	Negative feedback: • Self-criticism • Lower self-efficacy • Increased stress and worry • Task becomes increasingly aversive
Biases: • Present bias • Projection bias • Planning fallacy • Temporal discounting • Loss aversion	Environment: • Digital distractions • Physical environment • Social environment • Stress • Comfort		
	Self-regulation: • Cognitive load and mental fatigue • Emotion regulation issues • Instant gratification • Lack of structure and routines		

Reflect on your procrastination cycle

Looking over your reflections, where in the cycle do you think you struggle the most?

- Pre-actional phase (motivation/appraisal)
- Actional phase (starting/focus)
- Avoidance phase (distraction/relief)
- Post-actional phase (self-criticism/lower self-efficacy)

Briefly describe what makes this phase most difficult for you.