

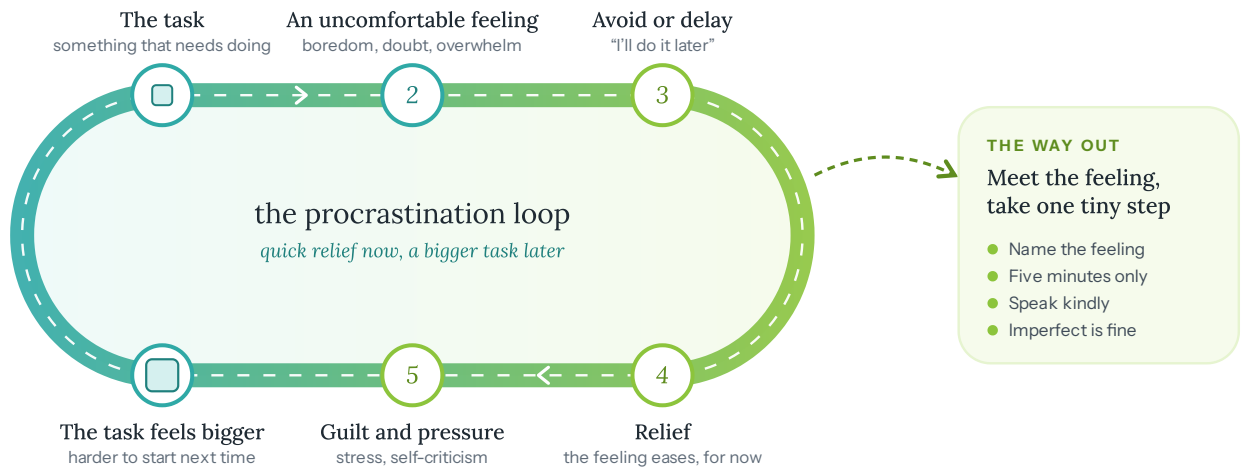
The Procrastination Loop

Why we put things off, and how to step out

Procrastination isn't laziness. Research suggests it is often about **managing uncomfortable feelings**: putting a task off brings quick relief, but the cost lands on our future self. Each time round the cycle, the task can feel bigger and harder to begin.

01 The procrastination loop

short-term relief, long-term growth of the task



02 What's underneath?

tick the feelings that come up for you

- ☐ boredom ☐ frustration ☐ fear of failing ☐ perfectionism ☐ overwhelm ☐ not knowing where to start ☐ self-doubt
- ☐ resentment ☐ tiredness ☐ fear of judgement

03 Tracing my loop

one task I'm avoiding

1 The task I'm putting off

What it is, and why it matters to me.

2 The feeling it brings up

What I feel when I think about starting.

3 What I do instead

Scrolling, tidying, other tasks, sleep...

4 The relief, and how long it lasts

Minutes? An evening? Then what?

5 The cost

Guilt, stress, lost time, self-criticism.

6 How the task looks now

Has it grown in my mind? How?

04 Ways to step out

try one at a time

Shrink the first step

Commit to five minutes. Momentum often follows.

Name the feeling

"I'm avoiding this because I feel overwhelmed."

Be kind, not harsh

Self-compassion is linked with less procrastination and stress.

Make an if-then plan

"If it's 9am, then I'll open the document."

Reduce the friction

Set up in advance; move distractions out of reach.

Notice progress

Mark each small step. Done beats perfect.

05 My next tiny step

bring this to your next session

FIVE-MINUTE START

The smallest first step I can take:

THE FEELING I EXPECT

What I might feel, and that I can feel it and begin anyway:

IF-THEN PLAN

If it's (time / place), then I will...

A KIND WORD

What I'll say to myself if I slip:

SOURCES

- Gollwitzer, P. M. (1999). Implementation intentions: Strong effects of simple plans. *American Psychologist*, 54(7), 493–503.
- Sirois, F. M. (2014). Procrastination and stress: Exploring the role of self-compassion. *Self and Identity*, 13(2), 128–145.
- Sirois, F. M., & Pychyl, T. A. (2013). Procrastination and the priority of short-term mood regulation: Consequences for future self. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 7(2), 115–127. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12011>
- Steel, P. (2007). The nature of procrastination: A meta-analytic and theoretical review of quintessential self-regulatory failure. *Psychological Bulletin*, 133(1), 65–94.