The Five-Minute Start

PRACTICE · PROCRASTINATION AND GETTING STARTED

When starting feels hard, aim only for the first five minutes

Starting is often the hardest part of a task. Agreeing to work on something for just five minutes can make it feel less daunting, and many people find it easier to continue once they've begun. You're free to stop when the time is up.



AFTER FIVE MINUTES, CHOOSE

Every option counts as a success

- ○ **Keep going** — *set another five, or longer*
- ○ **Stop, guilt-free** — *you started, and that matters*
- ○ **Leave a note** — *the next tiny step, for later*

01 Plan my five minutes

small and specific works best

THE TASK

What I've been putting off

_____

_____

MY FIVE-MINUTE VERSION

The smallest useful piece

_____

_____

MY START PLAN

Deciding ahead

When _____

I will _____

02 Clear the way first

tick anything that would help

- ○ phone in another room
- ○ the file or book already open
- ○ a drink nearby
- ○ timer set for five minutes
- ○ tell someone I'm starting
- ○ work alongside someone
- ○ music that helps me focus

03 My week of five-minute starts

noticing what happens once I begin

DAY	WHAT I STARTED	DREAD BEFORE	AFTER FIVE MINUTES, I…			DREAD AFTER
Mon		/10	○ kept going	○ stopped	○ noted	/10
Tue		/10	○ kept going	○ stopped	○ noted	/10
Wed		/10	○ kept going	○ stopped	○ noted	/10
Thu		/10	○ kept going	○ stopped	○ noted	/10
Fri		/10	○ kept going	○ stopped	○ noted	/10
Sat		/10	○ kept going	○ stopped	○ noted	/10
Sun		/10	○ kept going	○ stopped	○ noted	/10

04 Reflecting

at the end of the week

What I noticed about starting

_____

_____

What I'd like to talk about

_____

_____

Why it can help: procrastination is often more about avoiding the uncomfortable feelings a task brings up than about time, and a short, defined start can make them easier to approach. Stopping after five minutes still counts. If starting feels hard most of the time, it may be worth talking through.

SOURCES

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