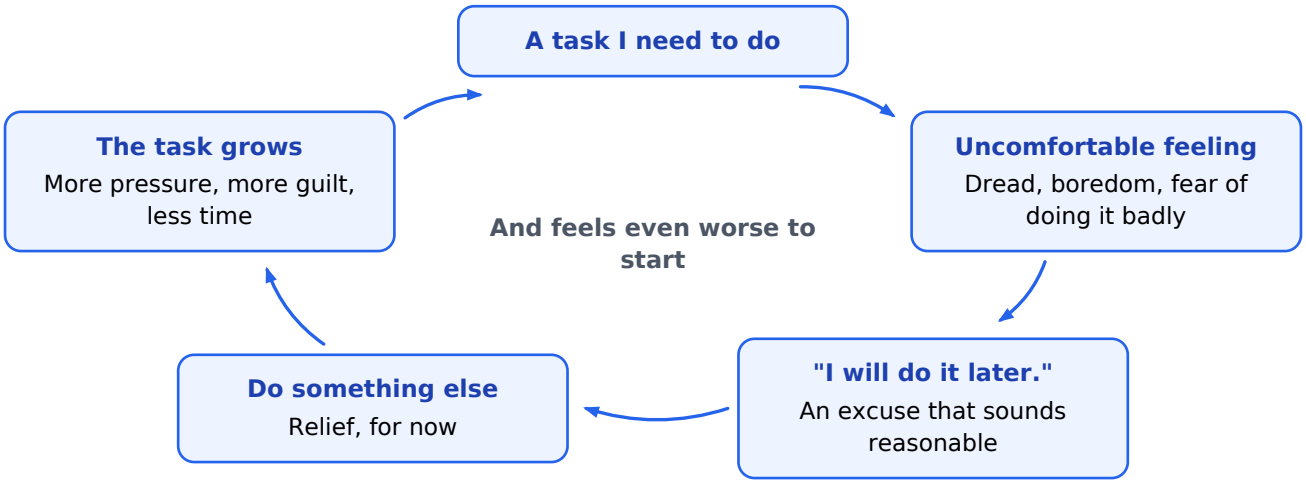
Understanding procrastination

Why we put things off, and ways to get started.

Procrastination is delaying something you intend to do, even though you know the delay will cost you. It is rarely a problem with time management. Usually it is a way of escaping how the task makes you feel: bored, overwhelmed, anxious, not good enough.



What makes a task easy to put off

- [ ] It is vague, or I do not know where to begin
- [ ] It feels huge
- [ ] I am afraid of doing it badly
- [ ] It is boring
- [ ] The deadline is far away
- [ ] I resent having to do it
- [ ] I am tired or low
- [ ] There is something more appealing to hand

Ways through

1. **Make the first step tiny and specific.** "Open the document and write the title."
2. **Five minutes only.** Then decide whether to continue.
3. **Name the feeling.** "I am avoiding this because I am scared it will not be good." Feelings shrink a little when named.
4. **Catch the excuse.** "I work better under pressure" is rarely true.
5. **Set the scene.** Phone in another room. One tab open.
6. **Fix a time and a place.** "At 10, at the kitchen table."
7. **Be kind about past delay.** Self-criticism makes the task more unpleasant and the avoidance stronger.

> **Note**
> You do not need to feel ready before you start. The feeling of being ready usually comes after you have begun.

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