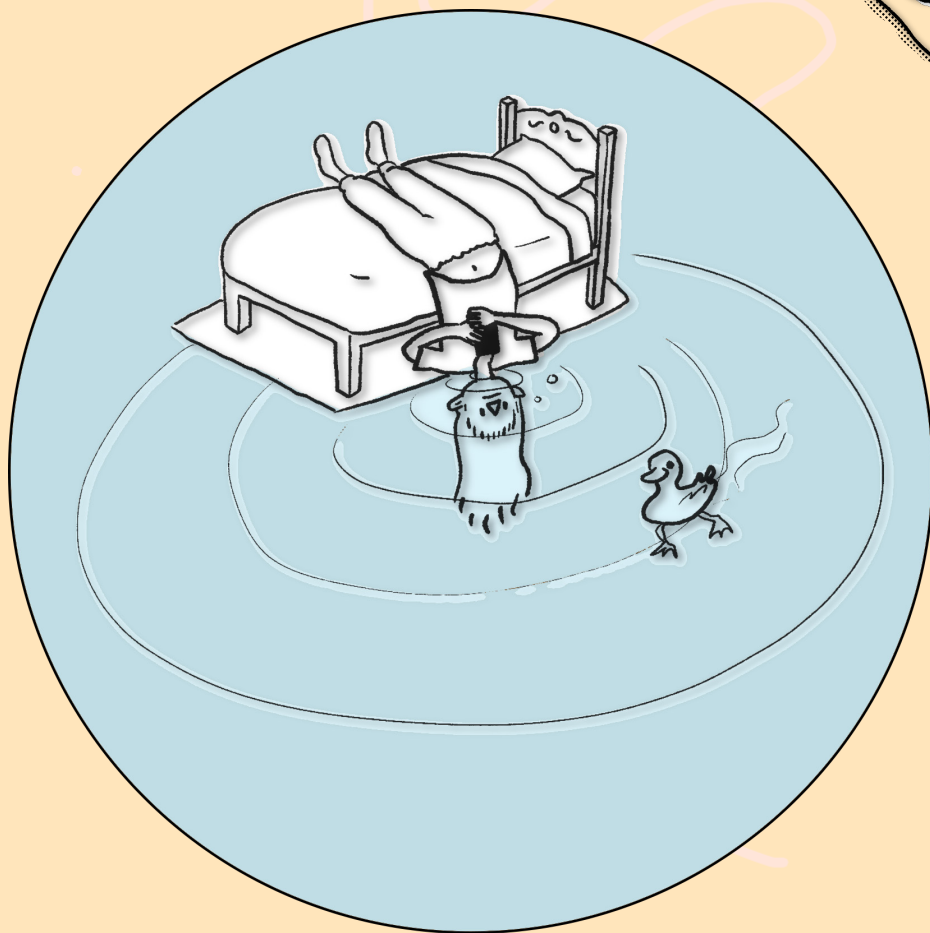


# PROGRASTINATION



This guide has been created as part of the Rethink Mental Illness Step Up Universities project, which is funded by the City Bridge Trust. The scheme uses students' real-life experiences to try and foster a positive mental health community and help other students with their mental health. This guide has been created by Anna, Bethan, Phil and Rosie, with illustrations from Dylan Wilson.

We would also like to say thanks to UCL, Students' Union UCL, UWL, UWL Students' Union, The University of Middlesex, MDX Students' Union, University Arts London Students' Union, SOAS University, SOAS Students' Union and London Metropolitan University. Additionally, we would like to thank all of our student mentors for their input into the creation of this guide.

May Gabriel, Project Manager Step Up Universities

Rianna Fleming, Project Officer Step Up Universities

# Content Creators!



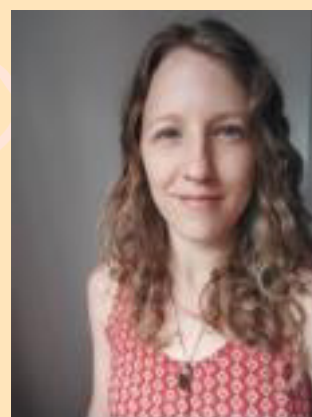
Hi everyone! I'm Rosie, a final year Fine Art student at Central Saint Martins. I really value projects like Step Up, because the more discussion around wellbeing and mental health happens, the more normalised it becomes.

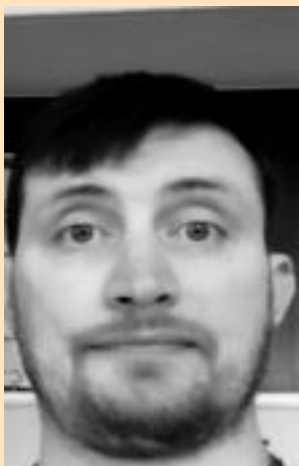
I have struggled with my own mental health and increasingly so, over the last few years. The current crisis has exacerbated things for everyone and indeed, myself. I hope that this zine proves useful and can give ways of alleviating the added pressures of university workloads at a time like this.

Hi there! My name's Anna and I'm a PhD student at SOAS. Having been involved with universities for many years now, it's great to see that mental health is starting to get greater attention, with a wider reach.

When I was younger and in university, mental health wasn't talked about as much, and I thought it was something you only had to think about if you were having significant difficulties – so I, like many others, didn't really pay attention to my mental health. I've since learned that everyone has mental health, whether you feel like you're struggling or not, and that we can all benefit from regularly checking in with ourselves and making sure we're getting what we need.

I now see looking after our mental health as a bit like being our own parent, friend or mentor – making our wellbeing a priority, and doing things that sometimes we don't feel like doing because we know it's good for us, while consistently showing ourselves love and understanding. With the topic of procrastination, this zine taps deeply into these themes. I hope you find it useful!





Hello, my name's Phil. I'm a second year Nursing student at the University of West London. I joined the Step Up project because I wanted to try to do something to support the wellbeing of my colleagues at university and within my professional career. Healthcare professionals (including those of us still studying), are great at trying to educate others about looking after all aspects of their biopsychosocial wellbeing. However, we don't necessarily put it into practice ourselves, I know I don't as much as I should.

My own personal journey with mental health has been largely impacted by factors that have sometimes been out of my control, and I think that might resonate with a lot of people currently. So hopefully this and the other zines will be able to offer some proactive advice and remind you all that it is perfectly fine to remember, it is okay to not be okay.

Hello, I'm Bethan. I'm a 2nd year MSc student training to be a speech and language therapist, at UCL. I first started realising that there was something I could be doing to help others with their mental health before I came back to uni. I was working in a hospital and was offered some extra training to be a Mental Health Ally. I really quickly realised that looking after the people around us and their mental health should be part of everyone's jobs and even more so within healthcare.

Back at university it seemed like everyone was talking about mental health much more than they were when I was studying before, but it's early days. Which is why I was so pleased to hear about the Step Up project and wanted to get involved with the great work they're doing!

While the pandemic has altered some of our plans, I hope that these zines are reaching a lot more people than we could have done with workshops. I also know that I have learned a lot about looking after my own mental health through this project, as well as having the opportunity to develop skills which I know will make me a better Speech and Language Therapist after graduation.



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# Intro

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Procrastination is something that a vast majority of people are familiar with and know only too well. It can infiltrate many different areas of our lives and can become a particular burden in university, impacting your productivity, creativity and most importantly your mental health. The link between mental health and procrastination is so intertwined to the point where it is difficult to know which is the cause and which is the effect. We are all so different, so understanding procrastination, what it looks like for you and where it comes from can be very useful, not only for the sake of your degree but also to help you maintain good mental wellbeing.

Due to the recent circumstances (COVID-19 and strikes) we are working from home more than ever, without access to any of our University learning spaces. It's difficult, and it's really easy to fall into negative patterns – both practically and cognitively.

In this zine, we explore the different root causes of procrastination and how it can manifest differently in different people, as well as providing you with some tried and tested methods to combat it, while also being gentle with yourself (the last thing we want to do is cause more stress!)

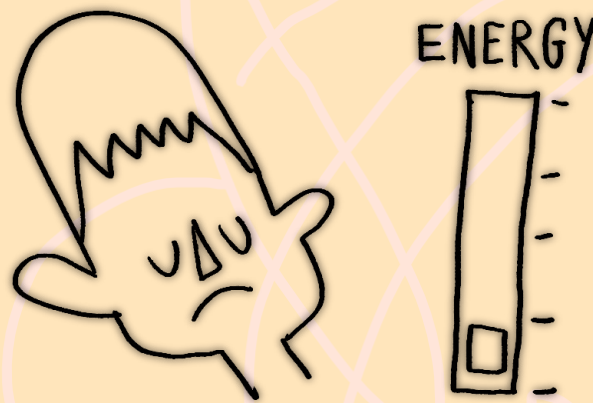
From,

Rosie, Anna, Bethan and Phil

# What is procrastination?

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Procrastination can be defined as deciding to delay, postpone or not complete a task or goal that you have committed to. It occurs when you are avoiding doing something, despite knowing that there may be negative consequences to not following through with the task. It is often mistaken for laziness, when in fact, the root causes lie elsewhere in low self-confidence, fear and depleted energy, etc. Whilst procrastination is a common human behaviour, it can become incredibly problematic for some people, with increasingly serious negative consequences.



## Confronting procrastination head on

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It's strange becoming a student! Whether you're coming straight from school, after a gap year, or after a few years out in work – it's a massive adjustment. It took me quite a lot of time to adjust to this new lifestyle and I spent a lot of that time procrastinating and wondering if I was just not cut out for my course.

There were a few things that helped me tackle my own procrastination – which has been really important as I am on a very demanding course. I have started a mindfulness practice which I think really helps me to focus on my work better. I try to pinpoint how I'm feeling at any given time, what my thoughts are about that and how it is affecting my behaviour. I quickly realised that when I'm procrastinating, it is very rare that it's because I'm not trying hard enough (although sometimes I'm just bored)! Most of the time when I catch myself procrastinating it's because I'm feeling quite strongly one way or the other and haven't acknowledged those feelings. Once I've acknowledged what's causing me to procrastinate, I stop what I'm doing and try to reset.



# How to Check in with Yourself:

This can be done anywhere (ok maybe not absolutely everywhere... I don't recommend it if you're driving)! You can take as little or as much time as you have - if I've got a time limit, I set an alarm on my phone, so I don't keep stopping to check the time. It will feel easier on some days than others and gets easier with practice so don't worry if you keep getting distracted to start with.

1) **Stop** what you're doing!

2) Close your eyes if you can or focus on something in front of you which isn't going to be distracting.

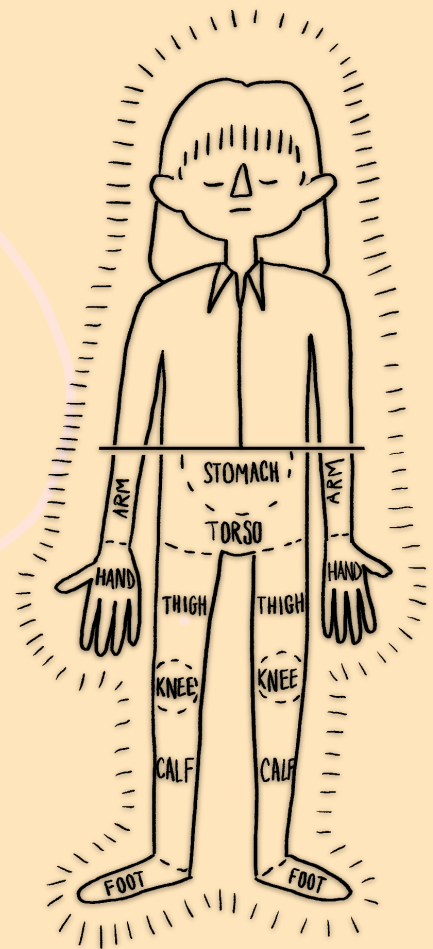
3) Now focus your attention on how your body is feeling. You can focus on each body part in turn and scan down your body or focus on your whole body and see if anything catches your attention.

4) Next turn your attention to your thoughts and feelings. If you notice a specific feeling, see if there's anywhere you feel it physically (if I get nervous, I very often get a tightness in my shoulders).

5) Now you've acknowledged where you're at it's time to re-set yourself! Spend a minute or so really focusing on your breath. This is the bit where I sometimes get distracted, it can help to:

- Focus on a part of your body where you can feel the breath, like your belly moving with the breath or the area around your nose as the air goes in and out.
- Count each breath in and out.
- Put your hands on your belly or chest so you can physically feel the movement.

6) Open your eyes and take a minute to think about what to do next. What is going to be best considering how you're feeling?





# Pursed Lip Breathing

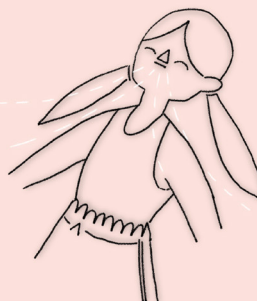
If you feel as though you are getting anxious and you start experiencing physical responses to procrastination, such as fast heartbeat and sweaty palms, this breathing exercise can help to quickly reduce your symptoms. It helps to regulate and slow down your breathing back to normal before you get to the point of hyperventilating. Give this a try next time you feel these physical responses coming on!

## Pursed lip breathing

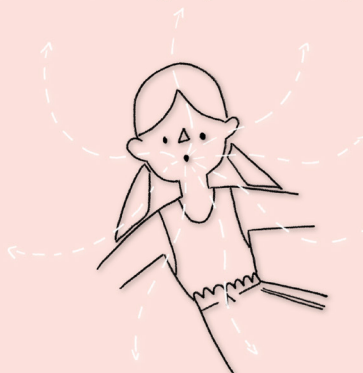
- 1** Relax your neck and shoulder muscles.



- 2** Breathe in for 2 seconds through your nose, keeping your mouth closed



- 3** Breathe out for 4 seconds through pursed lips.



# Finding the root causes of procrastination

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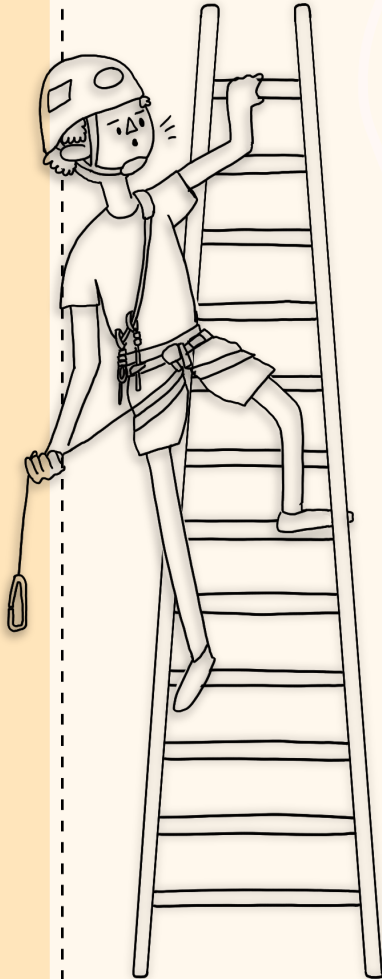
1. Feeling overwhelmed is a very common root cause of procrastination. You may feel as though have too much to do in a little amount of time. It can help to break down tasks into smaller parts and set realistic plans in place. If the content of the work is overwhelming and you don't understand, reach out to your peers and university support as quickly as possible, to avoid this feeling intensifying.
2. Imposter Syndrome, resulting from a loss of/low confidence can make you feel you like you do not belong, and your work will never be good enough. If you feel like this then remember you have already achieved things to reach to be where you are today already, don't compare yourself to others and try to accept criticism as constructive feedback and not a sign of failure.
3. Having too many tasks on the go, or 'spinning too many plates' can leave you with decision fatigue, meaning you don't know which to prioritise. Try the Avoidance Hierarchy, as well as taking time out to balance your stressors.
4. Anxiety and/or Depression can cause a lot of negative thought patterns and a loss of confidence. This can be a vicious cycle as well where the procrastination feeds the anxiety and/or depression further. There is no right or wrong approach to dealing with this, it might be as simple as a good night's sleep or it may be seeking some advice and support.
5. General lack of motivation can play a part in your procrastination. This can be caused by a variety of different things including lack of routine, lack of enjoyment in what you are doing, an unhealthy lifestyle or underlying health condition. Take some time to check in with yourself and see where those feelings are coming from and try out a new routine/lifestyle.

## Avoidance Hierarchy

The avoidance hierarchy is a CBT tool that can help you start something that makes you feel anxious and overwhelmed. The idea is that you are gradually exposed to the thing that is worrying you, little by little, until you are able to build up your confidence and ability to take on more. This can be applied to your academic work and also your wider life!

What you need to do to complete this, is to fill out the hierarchy by ranking your work tasks based upon how much they are worrying you, with the most worrying being at the top and the least worrying at the bottom. Then, you start from the bottom of the hierarchy, completing each task, until you have worked up to the most worrying task.

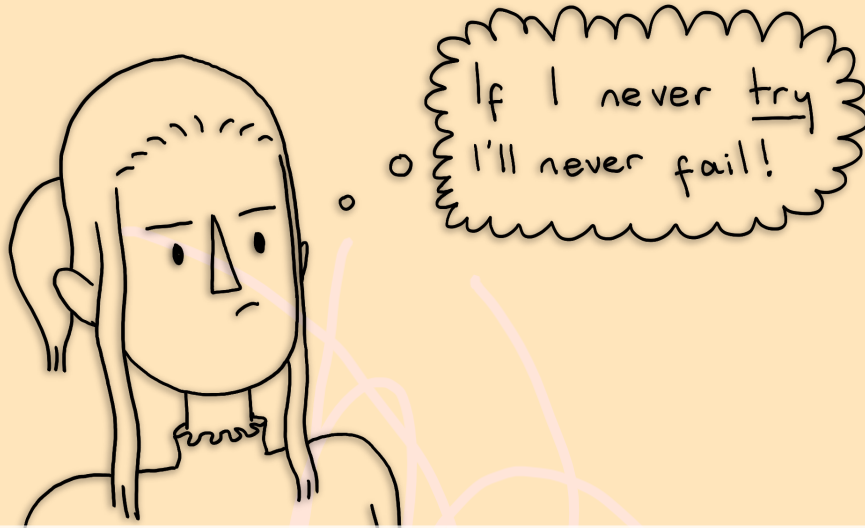
For example, starting your dissertation can be terrifying! It's a daunting, long and challenging process - naturally, you might start to procrastinate and put it off. However, using the avoidance hierarchy, you can start to order your tasks so that it is clear which ones you can do without feeling overwhelmed. You may start by formatting your document and writing introductions, before deciding to take on something more daunting such as primary research. This way, you are making progress whilst building your confidence.



Situation	Anxiety % (1-100)

# Why am I procrastinating?

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## **Digging deeper into why:**

It's helped to really ask myself why I'm procrastinating. I 'take my thoughts to court' and try to work out what my beliefs are about the situation and I challenge those thoughts. 'Are they really true?' 'What's the evidence to support this belief or to negate it?' 'Is this problem inevitable or are there solutions to this issue?' The answers I find are sometimes surprising. I find out that I have beliefs which I logically know don't make sense, but I'd never really realised I held them. The following are the reasons that I've found cause my procrastination – but things are different for everyone!

## **Disappointment:**

For example, I'll find that I'm afraid that the quality of the work won't be good enough, I'm afraid that the person who marks it is going to be disappointed in it/me, or I'm afraid I will be disappointed in myself. In this case, I instead remind myself that there is no 'perfect' way to write this paper, and I try to ease the expectations I'm putting on myself. I'll remind myself that if I at least give it a good try, the quality of the work is likely to be better than if I avoid the work until the last minute.

## **The perfect paper:**

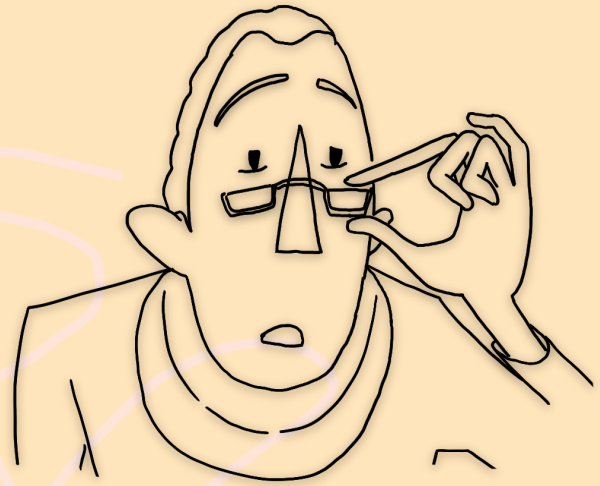
Sometimes the problem is that I want to make sure I get all the details into something I'm writing. So then I'll challenge the idea that this is even possible, or the idea that having all the details would in fact make this a better piece of writing (I was once actually marked down for over-referencing in a paper!).

### **The inner critic:**

Sometimes the issue is that I'm letting myself be over-critical of everything I've written so far, meaning I am continuously editing what I've done, rather than progressing with new content. This can make things go so slowly and make the task seem so unachievable. In these situations, I have to question whether the phrasing of a sentence is as important as getting more ideas down that can be edited later.

### **Killing the comparisons:**

Sometimes the issue is that I'm comparing myself to other people and assuming that they're doing better than me - that they're writing more than me, reading more, or that they don't find the work challenging etc. Again, I have to challenge these beliefs, remind myself that I have no idea how other people are actually finding the work, and challenge the idea that it even really matters to my work how other people find their work. When I realise only my work is relevant to me, it helps to quieten these anxieties.



### **Too much work!**

Sometimes the issue is that I feel the task is too big and overwhelming. In this case, I can try to break things down into smaller, more manageable chunks. I'll try not to focus on a whole piece of writing, but instead try to understand a smaller part and condense that into a sentence.

### **I don't understand the topic:**

Sometimes the issue is that the task I have to complete is a bit unknown to me - that I don't know what it involves fully yet, and something about that is scary... what if I end up having to read a paper I don't understand? ...what if it is a much bigger task than I currently think it is? I can calm these anxieties by providing myself with information - sit down to plan the task first, with no obligation to complete it at that stage.



**Motivation issues:**

And sometimes the issue is that my motivation is unclear to me. Maybe I once wanted to take this course because I thought I would major in that area, and now I've changed my mind. In these situations, I sometimes need to take a few minutes to find a new reason for motivation. Perhaps by finishing this course, I'm then able to take a different course, or I'm closer to graduating? I'll find something which is a reason why I'm still going, and I'll really try to focus on that thing in order to get something done.

**Journaling:**

One useful method for taking my thoughts to court is journaling. This can be done during down time, or if I'm struggling to get going on something I'll sit and journal about why. This can help me talk myself into a more motivated frame of mind. There are times though, where journaling has become a form of procrastination of its own (sneaky procrastination!) so it helps sometimes to set a timer for this.

## **Taking On My Procrastination**

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I have a long history of struggling with procrastination, although that was not always the case. There are times when I've felt very engaged with what I was doing, with no resistance to just getting things done. But at other times it's been typical for me to leave things to the last minute and end up writing papers as all-nighters. On several occasions I have found myself printing something half an hour before a deadline and then having to run to get somewhere in order to hand it in on time. This has backfired on me in several situations, including one very painful time when I was writing a paper the night before it was due, took a break on social media only to find out that a good friend had passed away. I was left grieving whilst still trying to meet the deadline a few hours later.

I tend to find myself with only two gears – go or stop. I'm either avoiding something entirely, or that task is the only thing I'm doing. Often, I've got so little time left to complete a task that I go into panic mode and that becomes the only thing in my world, leaving little time for life's basics such as cooking and socialising. There are times when I would really want to get things done and I would purposefully sit myself in front of my laptop with the document open for hours, not doing much at all.

It becomes a really physical form of anxiety for me sometimes. I feel tension all through my muscles, I feel nauseous, and fidgety in my feet/legs and hands. I end up having too much energy in my body, feeling like I need to go for a run or something to let all the energy out, and then later on, because of all this, I feel completely exhausted (which doesn't exactly help with getting stuff done!).



# How to Just Do It – Tips for Overcoming Procrastination

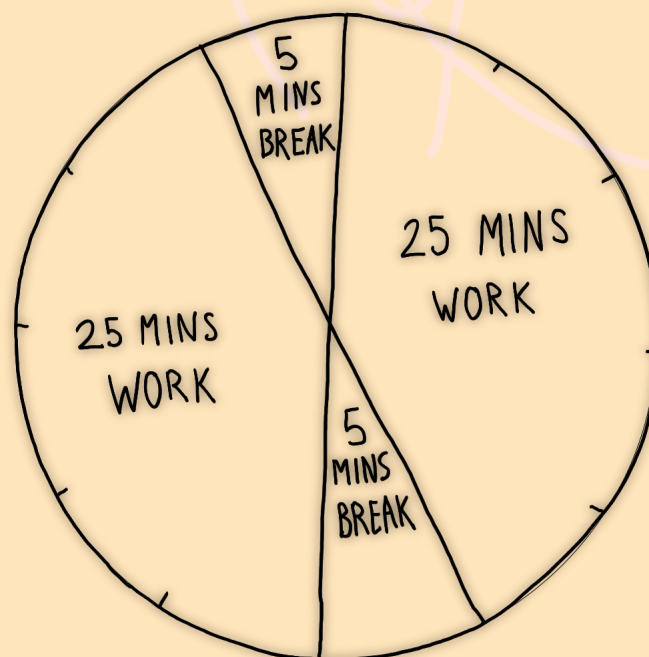
- **Work for a set period:** Working for hours on end can add to your procrastination and reduce productivity. Instead, try to set yourself a period of time that you will work up until, with no distractions, and then take a break. Try the Pomodoro™ Technique, which uses a timer to break down work into a set of intervals separated by breaks.

Pomodoro technique increases productivity by taking short scheduled breaks regularly, usually 25 minutes with a 5-minute break.

- **Find your prime time:** What time of the day do you work best? When do you feel most energised, productive and creative? Some people are early birds, some are night owls, and others find their productivity is best somewhere in between.

- **Find your prime place:** where do you work best? Your working environment is important, as distractions feed procrastination. If you get socially distracted, you may want to consider working in isolation, but if you get distracted by chores and activities, then you may be more suited to the library/a café.

- **Visualisation:** For people who are more visual, try to think about the task ahead, engaging all of your senses and noticing any obstacles that might stop you from achieving your goal/completing your task. Visualise yourself overcoming these obstacles and focus on how you feel once you have achieved your goal. This momentum will help you drive and get into your work.



- Plan rewards: Usually, the things we regard as play time and rewards are the things that distract us into procrastination (e.g. socialising) and end up making us feel guilty and more stressed. Planning regular rewards for completing tasks can boost motivation and reduce both distractions and negative feelings
- Tell someone your goal: By sharing your work goals with someone – a friend, peer, etc. – you will feel more committed to achieving your targets than when only you know them. In addition to this, that person can offer support and check in with you, which can make things feel less daunting.
- Being assertive and saying ‘no’: For those that get distracted socially, saying ‘no’ is not always easy, particularly when you don’t want to let others down. However, being assertive and prioritising your work is important! Try to find a compromise, for example, ‘I would love to hang out tonight, but I can’t because my essay is due on Friday. What about catching up on the weekend once it is handed in?’
- Use practical tools that can help: At the end of this zine we’ve put some useful tools and apps that can help you with procrastinating such as locks on phones, apps which block websites for certain periods of time etc. Sometimes you need the help, that’s why these things exist!

## **Procrastination and Mental Health: They Go Hand-in-hand**

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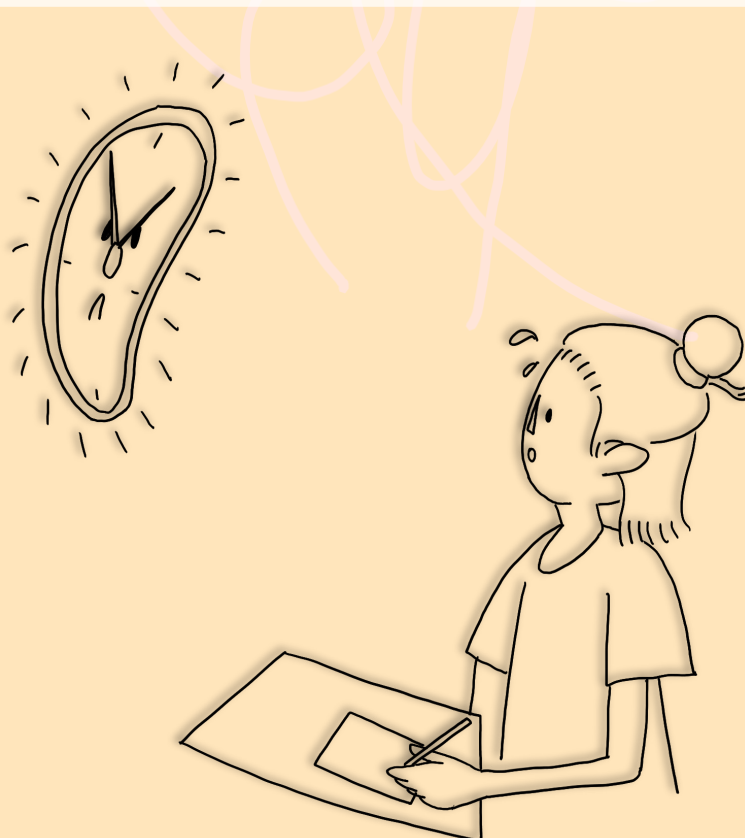
For me, there is an undeniable relationship between procrastination and managing my mental health. When my mental health is suffering, this can lead to procrastination. And when I am procrastinating, the lack of focus and productivity can lead to a spiral of negative mental health.

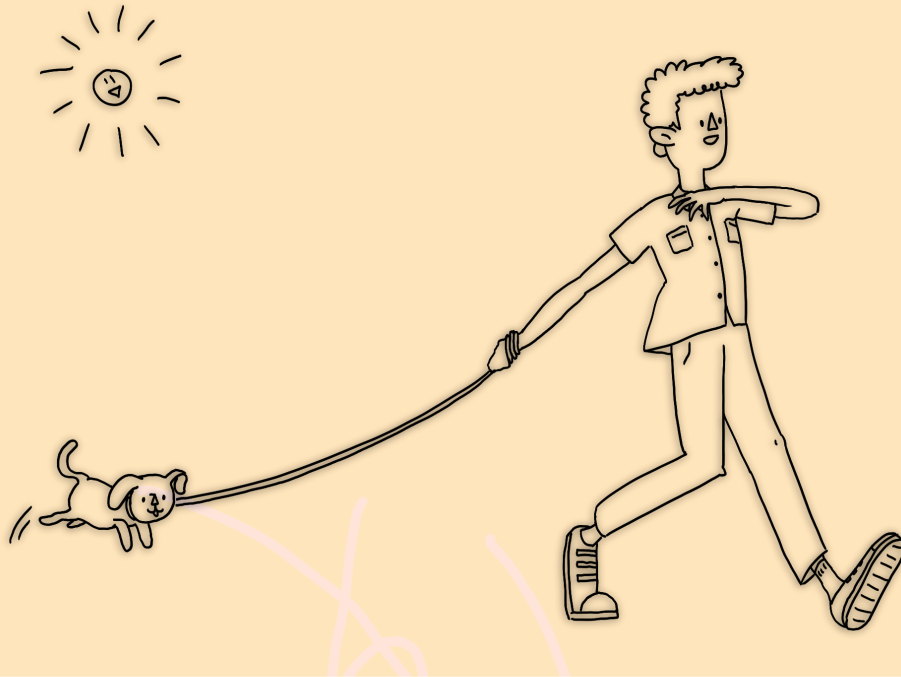
## When procrastination affects your mental health

A common misconception around procrastination is that laziness or lack of care are the causes. For me, delaying my work stems from a fear of inadequacy and an incessant perfectionism. The extreme black and white thinking that feeds many aspects of my mental health conditions, tells me that everything I do or make must be absolutely perfect or else it is entirely worthless. Tasks then become daunting and seemingly impossible, so I put them off for as long as I can. This also goes for productivity. I must write, edit and proofread the entire essay in one day, or else I have completely failed. Inevitably failing to meet my own self-imposed high standards contributes towards my feelings of failure both academically and in life – something I am constantly battling.

I think the biggest thing I have learnt to accept is the grey area, and whilst difficult, trying to make peace with less-than-perfection does help. Something is always better than nothing. I often catch myself watching the clock, worrying about how many hours I have left in the day to complete the task - easily consuming half of said hours just worrying and procrastinating as a result, because I don't want to deal with the stress.

The 'five-minute rule' can help for some people. Just tell yourself you will be productive for five minutes, if you want to continue after that, go for it, if not, take a break and maybe in an hour take another five minutes. Even if you only spend 10 minutes a day on a task, if you are consistent with that, you will have made good progress by the end of a week. Sometimes the task can just be simple, e.g. making a bullet point plan or gathering sources, so you are not faced with a blank canvas every time you open Word.





### **When your mental health causes procrastination**

In terms of a dip in mental health leading to procrastination, a little self-compassion goes a long way. If I've had a difficult or triggering day or woken up feeling like I can barely get out of bed let alone face uni assignments, accepting that helps. Trying to be productive when you are not in the right headspace only makes you feel worse and does not produce a good working outcome.

For example, I was so stressed and fixated on getting my dissertation finished, I pushed myself to my absolute mental limit. This resulted in an episode of self harm, which I had never engaged in before, that took me weeks to recover from. It was simply not worth it and a hard lesson to learn - nothing is more important than your mental health, even if it doesn't feel like that at the time. That assignment will still be there tomorrow, but you may be in a better place then. Or in a week. And if not, that is okay too.

Recognising that you are procrastinating and that this may be a sign your mental health is dipping is also something to be considerate of. For me, this can often be one of my red flags that I am struggling. When tasks seem absolutely impossible, and begin to stack up, I can very easily find myself going into a downwards spiral. Breaking down tasks into smaller elements can be helpful, as can planning out when you will complete each element, so as to structure breaks and enough free time to balance out your stress.

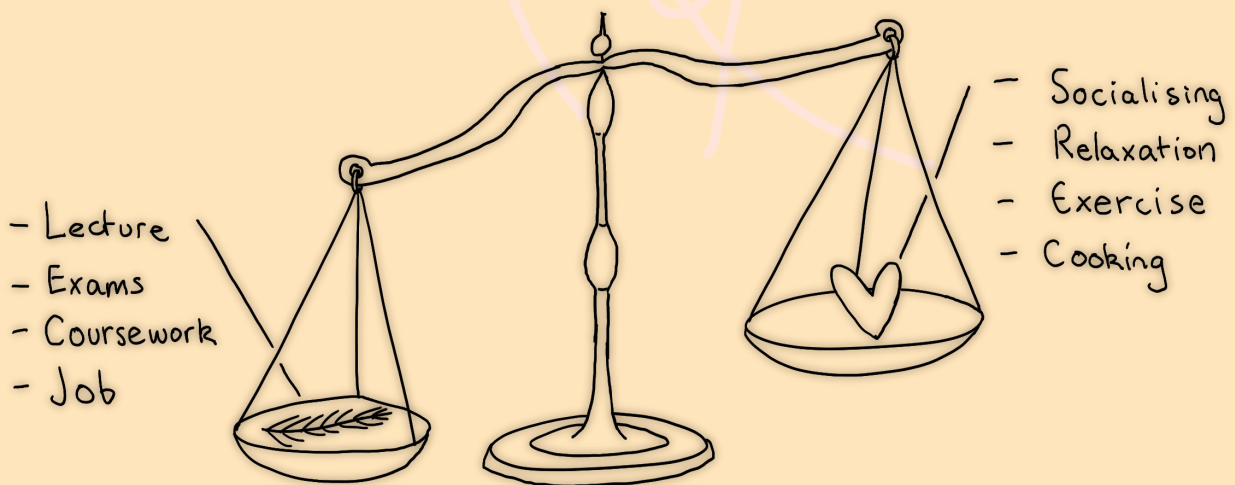
If I have one message to put across, it is that no one is 100% productive; we are not machines. We all have different productivity levels, and different ways of working. Equally, some of us have other challenges which may interfere, whether that's managing a mental illness, looking after children or fitting in study around a busy work schedule. And especially for final year students, you have come this far, you have gotten to this point, you can do this, whatever that voice in your head may be telling you. The sooner you start, the sooner you finish.

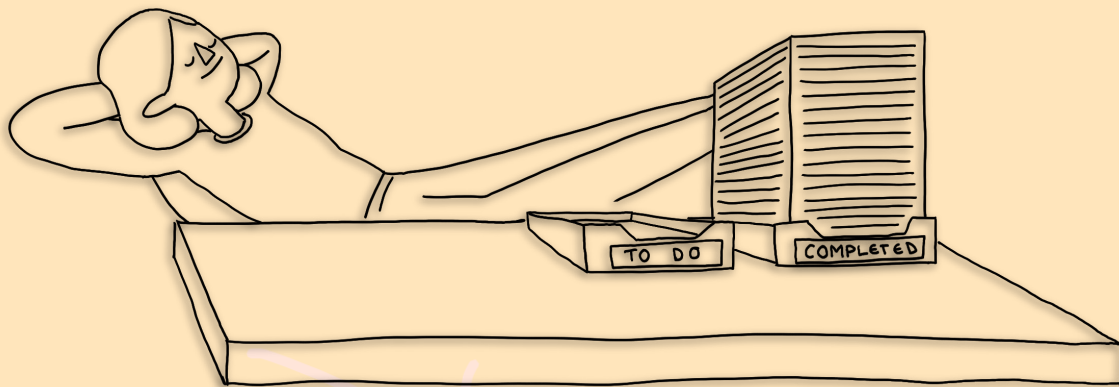
# The Balancing Act

Life is a balancing act, and particularly during university, there are a lot of stressors that can impact you and your mental health – one of the biggest being academic work, assessments and exams. Often, we feel like there isn't enough time in the day to 'balance' out these stressors with nice, positive things that help you destress – particularly during assessment periods! However, this is vital for your wellbeing and can help you avoid burning out.

A nice way to visualise it, is to see it like a set of scales; on one side, are the stressors that build up during the day/week, and on the other, the things that you do to offset that stress. Its not always possible to be fully balanced but the idea is to try and make both sides as equal as you can, and consistently.

Think about the types of things you like to do to destress – it could be hanging out with friends or spending time alone, watching your favourite Netflix programme – we are all different! Then think about ways in which you can implement these activities into your day to offset your stressors. This could look like breaking up a study session with some exercise or meeting a friend for dinner after a full day of university. Your destress activities don't need to be long and time consuming either, it could just be 10 minutes of mindfulness after a lecture or making sure you take the scenic route home.





## Procrastination: Is it Always Bad?

We have all been there, or at least I certainly have. I'm all set up on my laptop, ready and prepared to begin, on what is meant to be a full day of work. I've made a plan of action for the day; I know how many words I want to type. Heck, I've even got my snacks and drinks ready, prepped and within reach. However, when the day ends, I realise I have done less than half the work I had planned!!! On the plus side, thanks to the random article option on Wikipedia, I can now tell you Russia has won more gold medals in Beach Volleyball at the Youth Olympic games than any other country.

I think for some of you, this, unfortunately sounds unnervingly familiar. All the good intentions in the world will not stop me from spending time doing the house chores or watching cat videos, when I know I should be doing my academic work. This Ted Talk by Tim Urban, 'Inside the mind of a master procrastinator', is hilarious and superb at surmising this topic. Take a look if you have a free few minutes or fancy taking a moment away from whatever you are meant to be doing now (I promise I am joking – sorry).

There are some obvious negative stereotypes associated with procrastination and the impact it can have on some individuals, causing worry and anxiety over meeting deadlines. I know that I certainly feel anxious or guilty if I am not working. However, I want to try to flip this on its head a little - is procrastination always a bad thing? We all know that taking time to do something that improves your mood is likely to have a positive impact on your wellbeing (see Balancing Act in the next section). Furthermore, it's clear that if your wellbeing is in a good place, this will likely have a beneficial impact on your levels of work. So why not take, or even make, the time to procrastinate?



Now, I want to emphasise that this is absolutely not me advising you to do whatever you want and forget your work! Plus, I do not want all your university lecturers hunting me down when you tell them you missed your deadline. However, it is okay to let yourself have the mindset that it can be positive to procrastinate occasionally, or that if you know you are going to procrastinate then allow yourself to do it in a constructive manner with something that will make you feel good, or help you refocus later down the line.

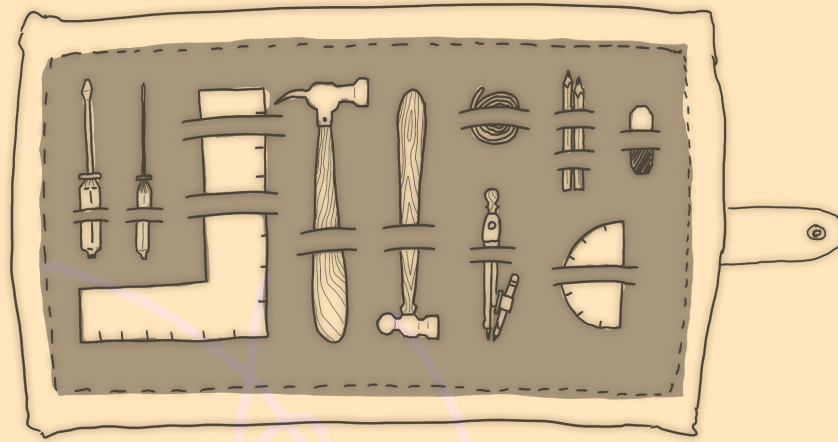
When it comes to procrastination, you are far from the first, last or only person to be in this situation. Instead of being hard on yourself and thinking this is entirely negative, try to find the positive. Taking that time to give yourself a bit of pleasure or being able to tick off another task as complete, is hopefully going to improve your mood and make you more productive.

And remember procrastinating is definitely not always a bad thing.



# Procrastination Busters

## - Useful Tools



We have listed some of our favourite tools that help us battle procrastination. If you haven't yet found something that works for you, give these a try!

**StayFocusd:** A Chrome productivity add-on that helps you beat procrastination by limiting the amount of time you can surf on time-wasting websites and social media.

**Screen Time Usage:** A lot of us are guilty of continually refreshing the apps on our phone and not even realising how long we are spending on it. Our phones can now tell us how long we've been spending on it every day, as well as a breakdown of where we are spending our time: social media, productivity, entertainment, etc.

- iPhone: Go to Settings > scroll down to screen time, which is grouped with notifications, Sound and Do not disturb > click on Screen Time to see your usage stats
- Android: Go to Settings > Battery. Tap the 3-dot menu, and go to Battery usage. Tap the 3-dot menu again, and choose Show full device usage.

**Tomatotimers.com:** A very popular technique, this online Pomodoro timer that helps you schedule in regular work breaks and reduces distractions.

**Stickk.com** – The idea is that you set yourself deadlines and choose an amount of money to give to a certain person or organisation if you don't meet your deadline.

**Buddhify app** – This app provides several different meditations including short ones for work breaks.

Centre for Clinical Interventions have produced some detailed information sheets on procrastination, filled with useful knowledge and practical strategies.

# Further Sources

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Tips to cope with anxiety: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/anxiety/#custom-2column-share-shelf>

## **Time-management tips:**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/time-management-tips/>

## **Stress and how to cope:**

<https://www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/living-with-mental-illness/wellbeing-physical-health/stress-how-to-cope/>

## **Mindfulness sources:**

<https://bemindful.co.uk/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/mindfulness/about-mindfulness/>

## **Basic medication guide for beginners:**

<https://www.mindful.org/how-to-meditate/>

You've probably recognised there is no one size fits all approach to procrastination and how it may affect you. Whatever works for you in terms of managing it, whilst allowing you to maintain your health and wellbeing, is completely the right approach. However, if you feel like you need more support and are struggling, it is absolutely okay to reach out and ask for help.

Contact someone you feel you can talk to, it could be your friends, family, GP, personal tutor or the student support team at university. Do not feel like you have to face this alone if it feels too daunting. Remember, it is Ok to not be Ok.

# Getting help

In the first instance, we would recommend seeking help through your university's welfare services, as often this is the quickest way to receive psychological help and advice as a student.

## Crisis Care

If you or someone you know is experiencing a wellbeing crisis and/or wants to end their life, please contact emergency services (999) or your GP as soon as possible. If you or the person feels they cannot keep themselves safe, stay with someone until help arrives. Please know that there is no right or wrong way to talk about suicidal feelings. The most important thing is to seek support so that you or the person you are concerned about do not have to struggle with those feelings alone.

If suicidal feelings become intense or develop into urges and/or plans please seek emergency support as soon as possible.

## Talking Therapies

Therapy for common disorders such as depression and anxiety are now widely available across England thanks to the Improving Access to Therapies (IAPT) services. Each borough or locality has its own therapy service which can vary in size, waiting times, and therapeutic options available. The most commonly available therapy is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Most services have a local website where you can look up how to get access to their service. Some require referrals via a GP, whilst others accept self-referrals. \*

## Mental Health Referrals

Adults aged 18 and over need to access Adult Mental Health Services. Both Adults and CAMHS services provide support for depression, problems with food, self-harm, abuse, violence or anger, bipolar, schizophrenia and anxiety, and more. There are local NHS services around the UK, with teams made up of nurses, therapists, psychologists, support workers and social workers, as well as other professionals. You can refer yourself for an assessment with either service to see what help you could get.

We would suggest initially visiting your local GP to see what help can be offered to you there. To find therapies in your local area, please go to <http://bit.do/findtherapynhs> \*

\*due to the ongoing situation with Covid-19 referrals may be slower than usual.

## **There is also a lot of help and support that you can get online:**

### **[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)**

Rethink Mental Illness helps millions of people affected by mental illness by challenging attitudes, changing lives. Website contains A-Z factsheets on conditions, treatments, living with mental illness also information for carers.

Advice line 0300 5000 927 Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4pm

### **[www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net)**

CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) is a health promotion charity with the aim of reducing male suicide in the UK. Website contains helpful information and ways to get involved. Helpline 0800 58 58 58 5pm to midnight, 7 days

### **[www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)**

Site focused on preventing young suicide with dedicated sections on resources for young people and their friends.

Hopeline UK 0800 0684141 Monday to Friday, 10am to 10pm

### **[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)**

Web-based information as well as an email service and helpline. Website contains A-Z of drugs and advice on what to do if you are worried about a friend.

Helpline 0300 123 6600, 2pm to 6pm

### **[www.lifesigns.org.uk](http://www.lifesigns.org.uk)**

Site that gives guidance and support around self-harming.

### **[www.nightline.ac.uk/want-to-talk](http://www.nightline.ac.uk/want-to-talk)**

A confidential listening, support and practical information service for University students. You can talk to them about anything – big or small – in complete confidence without judgement.

Call (+44)207 631 0101 6pm to 8am BST every night of term

### **[www.nopanic.org.uk](http://www.nopanic.org.uk)**

No Panic helps people who experience Panic Attacks, Phobias, Obsessive Compulsive Disorders and other related anxiety disorders including those people who are trying to give up Tranquillizers.

Helpline 0844 967 4848, 7 days 10am to 10pm

### **[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)**

Mind is a mental health charity offering both frontline services and online information. A-Z information about mental health and information and support can be found on their website.

Info line 0300 123 3393

Legal Advice line 0300 466 6463

### **[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)**

Samaritans provide a helpline for people wanting assistance to talk about issues related to their wellbeing or any other problem troubling them.

Helpline 08457 909090, 24hrs, 7 days a week

### **<https://www.studentminds.org.uk/>**

The student minds website has a wealth of information and resources about being a student and managing your mental health as well as information if you are concerned about a friend.