Overcoming Procrastination

(Adapted from University of Texas at Austin Learning Centre On-line Resource http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/lrnrs/handouts/1910.html)

Procrastination is a habit, not a fatal flaw. It takes persistence to change, but you can do it. Here’s how:

1. **Clarify your personal goals**
   - Articulate your personal goals. Post them where you will see them frequently, door, mirror, notebook, etc.
   - Be sure the task you are preparing yourself to do is one that is connected to your personal goals

2. **Manage your time effectively**
   - Write out a plan for yourself. Make a schedule.
   - Establish a routine that is connected to your career goal. Get out of a disorganized lifestyle by having a focus.
   - Organize your environment, complete with the tools you need to do your work. Make sure your environment is conducive to working. If it is not, change it.
   - If you aren’t clear about what you need to do to complete a task, get help. Talk to your instructor for suggestions on how to complete assignments.
   - Start early. Build procrastination into your schedule and call it “creative leisure.”
   - Start small and easily. Build gradually.

3. **Change your attitude**
   - Do you feel that the world is too difficult? That you are inadequate to meet its challenges? That you cannot function without a lot of approval? Are you frustrated with the limitations of others? Expect nothing less of yourself and others than perfection? Convinced that disaster hinges on your actions? These are immobilizing, self-defeating, avoidance-producing attitudes and beliefs. Recognize them as such, and use them only to the extent that they are helpful. Don’t indulge them and don’t believe them! Replace them with self-enhancing beliefs and attitudes.
   - Remind yourself of the emotional and physical consequences of procrastination. Then remind yourself of the consequences of not procrastinating.
   - Concentrate on little bits and pieces of your project; don’t think “all or nothing.”
   - For a day, pretend that you are a well-organized non-procrastinator. Imagine how you would think and behave. Then behave and think that way…even if only for a few minutes at a time.
4. Change your behaviour
   • Enlist the help of others to help you change. Set up a contract with a friend outlining the steps you will take to complete the task. Work with a friend who has no difficulty completing tasks efficiently.
   • Reward yourself by doing something you like after you have completed specified tasks.
   • Keep your tasks visible: reminders, signs, slogans, calendars, lists, etc.
   • Establish priorities according to the degree of unpleasantness. Start with the most unpleasant task first.

5. Accept yourself
   • Give yourself time to change.
   • Expect and forgive backsliding.
   • Give yourself credit for anything you do.
   • Forgive yourself a lot.