

GETTING STARTED ON TASKS

can be challenging for some, and may even cause some people to freeze and do nothing. Finding ways to make getting started easier can help you tackle big projects and small tasks.

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WHY DOES GETTING STARTED FEEL SO HARD?

Perfectionism!

If you are focused on wanting the end result to be perfect, it may feel hard to get started. You may want to only begin when you feel ready to make it perfect. This is true for learning a new skill, starting a new assignment, etc.

But this is not reasonable, as nothing is made perfect in one sitting!

Impostor phenomenon!

If you are dealing with impostor phenomenon, you may feel like you do not belong where you are and like you tricked everyone into thinking you are good at your job, smart, etc. You may worry that if you do this task, suddenly, your incompetence will be revealed.

But this is not true - you have made it this far - you are not an impostor!

Executive functioning challenges!

If you are stressed, hungry, tired, neurodivergent, sick, impoverished, disabled, or otherwise marginalized, your executive functioning skills may not be sufficient for organizing your projects into tasks. This is natural - executive functioning ebbs and flows and there is a lot of human variation.

Executive functioning challenges are not your fault and you are not lazy!

Avoidance!

If you are worried about a negative consequence, such as submitting subpar work, being discovered as an impostor, being called lazy, getting a low grade, and more, you might subconsciously be avoided the negative outcome associated with starting these tasks.

HOW DO I MAKE GETTING STARTED FEEL EASIER?

Ask for help!

Your advisors, teachers, and colleagues are there to help you. If you feel frozen and do not know how to start a task, ask for help.

Break tasks down into very small pieces!

Do not try to do the whole project in one day - today just make a new Word document. Tomorrow work on it for 10 minutes. Write a funny joke to get started.

Remind yourself of your achievements and values!

You have been successful to get to this point - what are concrete examples?

Rewards!!!

Give yourself a reward for every small piece of your task. BUT make sure you get rest without earning it. You always deserve rest, even without work!

Good enough is good enough!

Things do not need to be perfect. Submitting work that is done is enough.