Productivity and Procrastination

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Limited Time

Experiments

Helping Lab Mates

Reading Papers

Mentoring

Writing Papers/Grants

Experiments

Social Life

Teaching

Processing Data

Group Jobs

Laundry
Determining a deadline allows you to prioritize actions.
Planning Ahead

Tackle the task you want to do least as the first part of your day

To Do List

3  NMR 5-073, 074  10 min
4  Process NMRs  15 min
2  Set up reaction A  30 min
1  Run column on 5-071  45 min
7  Measure fluorescence for 5-77  45 min
5  Find paper for lit talk  45 min
6  Email  5 min

Creates plan for the day
Use time more efficiently with self set deadlines
Have more active work time
Getting Started

Zeigarnik Effect:
-subconscious drive to complete a task once started

Start the first step

Measured brain activity then gave time with puzzle

Offered half of participants reward for solving puzzle

Zeigarnik, B. *Psychologische Forschung* 1927, 9, 1-85
Pushing Through

Creating a routine allows you to focus more on important decisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offered choice of food</th>
<th>Given unsolvable geometry problem</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Time (min)</th>
<th>Attempts (count)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radish</td>
<td>8.35</td>
<td>19.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookie</td>
<td>18.90</td>
<td>34.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Food</td>
<td>20.86</td>
<td>32.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Routinize the Routine

Trick Yourself

Find strategies to make you more effective: identify problems

Use computer for non-work
  Read papers in the library
  Use time tracking software
  Set time limits
  Block websites

Spending a lot of time in lab without getting a lot done
  Used a timer to get 8 hours of lab work in a day
  If you have time to lean, you have time to clean

Talking to office mates too much
  Work in library
  Listen to music or coffee shop white noise
Trick Yourself Part 2

Rushing to complete tasks at end of day
- Schedule actions into my day to create segments

Procrastinating starting writing a paper
- Write on paper – not computer
- Create actions for smaller tasks – write outline, create figures

Difficulty continuing next step on a reaction
- Take a walk – do something that makes you happy
- Get started – you will want to finish!

Create little victories to increase momentum

Being productive is a skill you work toward