

Learn while making space for your fears and emotions.

# 7 STEPS TO BUSTING YOUR PROCRASTINATION HABIT!



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*“Discover why you procrastinate and make an action plan to beat the habit for good!”*



DOCTOR ME CLEVER

# HOW TO USE THIS PACK

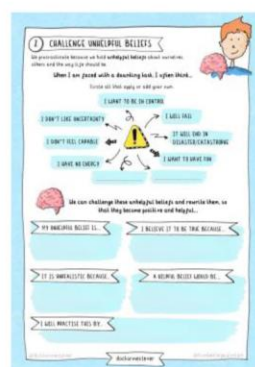
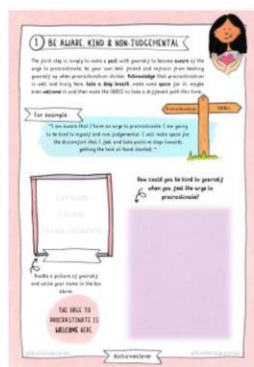
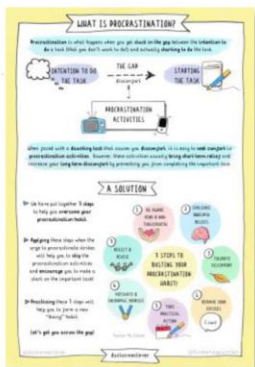
Welcome!

Thank you for taking the time to download your free procrastination-buster pack!

Inside you'll find a set of exercises that will walk you through the 7 steps to understanding and overcoming your procrastination habit.

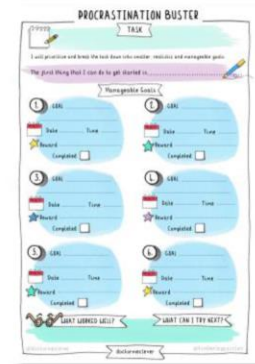
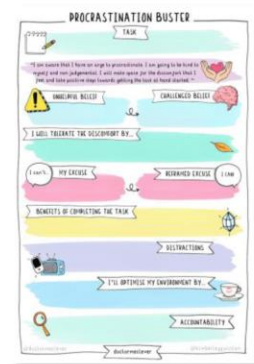
## PART 1

The first part of the pack is a short workbook that will help you to understand and unravel your own procrastination habit.



## PART 2

The second part includes a collection of printables that you can use every time you feel the urge to procrastinate. This section also includes some visuals that you can keep handy, to serve as quick reminders.

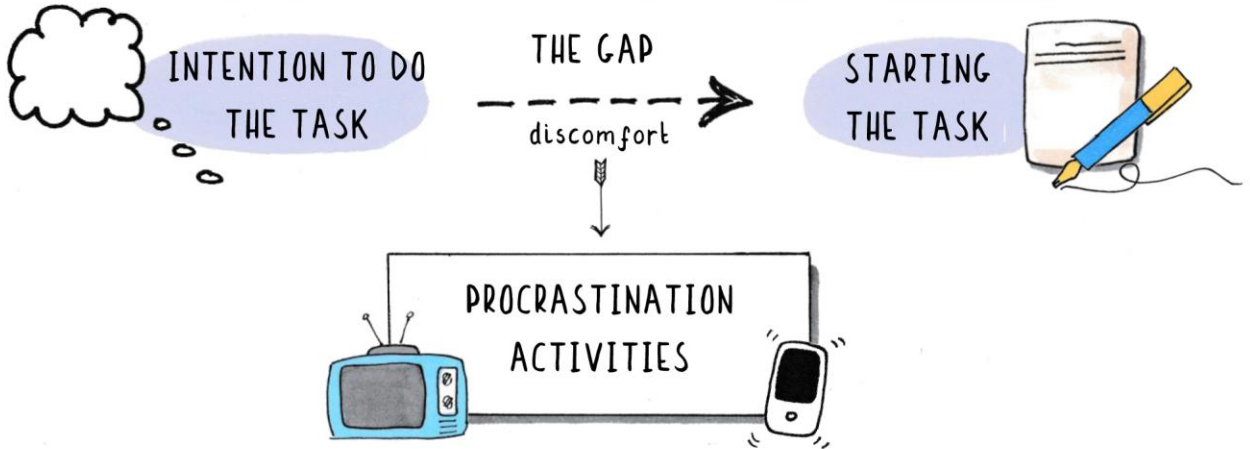


Enjoy!  
Wishing you all the best,  
Laura & Kimberley



# WHAT IS PROCRASTINATION?

Procrastination is what happens when you get stuck in the gap between the intention to do a task (that you don't want to do!) and actually starting to do the task.



When faced with a **daunting task** that causes you **discomfort**, it is easy to **seek comfort** in **procrastination activities**. However, these activities usually **bring short-term relief** and increase your **long-term discomfort** by preventing you from completing the important task.

## A SOLUTION

► We have put together **7 steps** to help you **overcome your procrastination habit**.

► **Applying** these steps when the urge to procrastinate strikes will help you to **skip** the procrastination activities and **encourage** you to make a start on the important task!

► **Practising** these 7 steps will help you to form a new "doing" habit.

Let's get you across the gap!



Doctor Me Clever

# 1 BE AWARE, KIND & NON-JUDGEMENTAL



The first step is simply to make a **pact** with yourself to become **aware** of the urge to procrastinate, be your own best friend and refrain from beating yourself up when procrastination strikes. **Acknowledge** that procrastination is well and truly here, **take a deep breath**, make some **space** for it, maybe even **welcome** it and then make the **CHOICE** to take a different path this time.



For example:

*"I am aware that I have an urge to procrastinate. I am going to be kind to myself and non-judgemental. I will make space for the discomfort that I feel and take positive steps towards getting the task at hand started."*

I AM AWARE

I AM KIND

I AM NON-JUDGEMENTAL

How could you be kind to yourself when you feel the urge to procrastinate?

Doodle a picture of yourself and write your name in the box above.

**THE URGE TO PROCRASTINATE IS WELCOME HERE.**



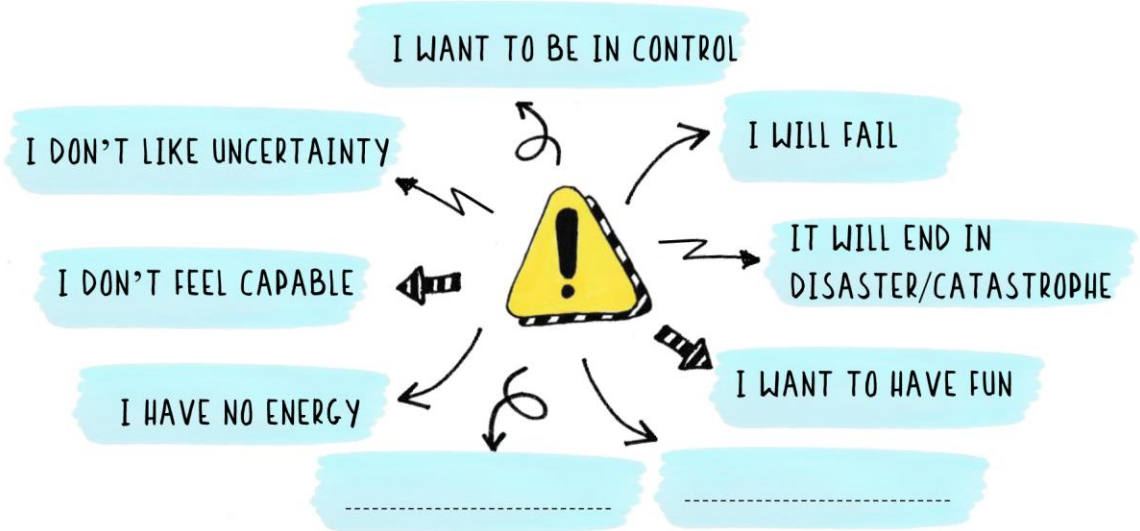


# 2 CHALLENGE UNHELPFUL BELIEFS

We procrastinate because we hold **unhelpful beliefs** about ourselves, others and the way life should be.

When I am faced with a daunting task, I often think...

Circle all that apply or add your own.



We can challenge these unhelpful beliefs and rewrite them, so that they become positive and helpful...

MY UNHELPFUL BELIEF IS...

I BELIEVE IT TO BE TRUE BECAUSE...

IT IS UNREALISTIC BECAUSE..

A HELPFUL BELIEF WOULD BE...

I WILL PRACTISE THIS BY..

# 3 TOLERATE DISCOMFORT



Unhelpful beliefs can make you feel uneasy and cause discomfort.

When you can't stand these feelings and can't tolerate them, you seek comfort and turn to procrastination activities that are pleasurable.

Discomfort feels different to each of us and may depend on the type of task that you are faced with.

## When I am faced with a daunting task I feel...

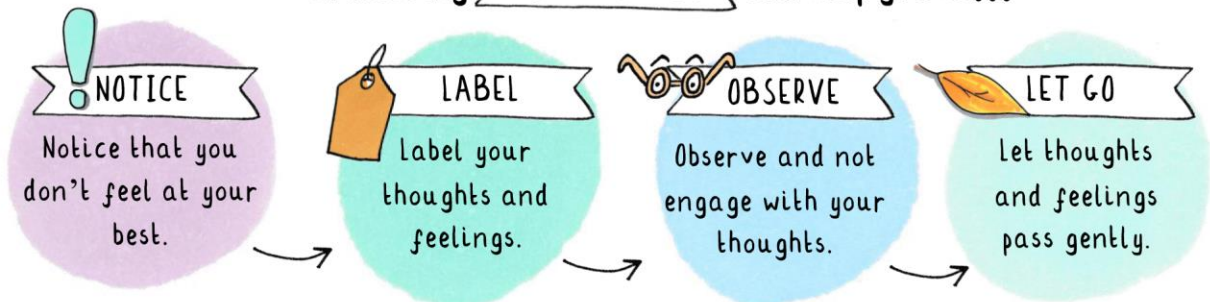
Tick those that apply or add your own.

|           |                          |             |                          |             |                          |            |                          |
|-----------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| WORRIED   | <input type="checkbox"/> | FRUSTRATED  | <input type="checkbox"/> | ANXIOUS     | <input type="checkbox"/> | DESPERATE  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ANGRY     | <input type="checkbox"/> | RESENTMENT  | <input type="checkbox"/> | PANICKED    | <input type="checkbox"/> | FRIGHTENED | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| BORED     | <input type="checkbox"/> | DEPRESSED   | <input type="checkbox"/> | UNHAPPY     | <input type="checkbox"/> | UPSET      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| IRRITABLE | <input type="checkbox"/> | OVERWHELMED | <input type="checkbox"/> | EMBARRASSED | <input type="checkbox"/> | EXHAUSTED  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -----     | <input type="checkbox"/> | -----       | <input type="checkbox"/> | -----       | <input type="checkbox"/> | -----      | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Learning to tolerate discomfort makes you less likely to turn toward unhelpful procrastination activities and takes you a step closer to getting the important stuff done!

Practising mindfulness is a great method for learning to tolerate discomfort.

## Practising MINDFULNESS can help you to...



## SIMPLE TECHNIQUES TO TRY (See recommended resources list for more suggestions.)

Practise breathing exercises.

Picture yourself riding the wave of emotion as it rises and falls.

Use your senses. Observe the colours, tastes, sounds, sights and smells around you.

Picture discomfort tugging at the other end of a rope that you're holding. Picture yourself letting go of the rope.

Picture thoughts as passing cars or falling leaves.



# 4 REFRAME EXCUSES



Procrastinators make convincing excuses and draw unhelpful conclusions from them. Doers may make excuses but counter them with helpful conclusions.

Colour in the convincing excuses that you can relate to, or write your own in the empty speech bubbles.

A collection of ten speech bubbles arranged in two rows. The top row contains: "I am too tired.", "I'll do it after I've done this.", an empty bubble with three horizontal dashed lines, "I don't feel prepared.", and another empty bubble with three horizontal dashed lines. The bottom row contains: "...but I'll miss my favourite episode of..", "I've got plenty of time.", an empty bubble with three horizontal dashed lines, another empty bubble with three horizontal dashed lines, and "I don't have everything I need."

Once you've identified your excuse, you can reframe it and draw a helpful conclusion from it.

Three examples of reframed excuses, each in a colored box with a speech bubble above it. 1. Yellow box: "I am too tired." above "But I could do something small to start now." 2. Teal box: "I've got plenty of time." above "But it's better to start now than to leave it until last minute." 3. Purple box: "...but I'll miss my favourite episode of.." above "But it is not a priority and I can reward myself later." Below these are two more empty boxes: a green one and a blue one, each with a speech bubble containing three horizontal dashed lines.

# 5 TAKE PRACTICAL ACTION



The next step is to take **practical action** (see the stages below). If you like working with pen and paper, you might

find the **free printables** (in the second part of this pack) useful for this step. Alternatively the list-making app Trello and the scheduling apps Google calendar or iCal might be of interest to you.

## A. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

In no particular order, list or map all of the tasks you would like to complete.

## B. PRIORITISE.

Give each task a priority number (with 1 representing the highest priority task).

## C. SET MANAGEABLE GOALS.

Take your highest priority task and break it down into small, realistic and manageable goals.

## D. SCHEDULE WHEN?

Schedule each manageable goal into your calendar of choice e.g. iCal or Google.

## E. REMOVE DISTRACTIONS.

Think about what usually distracts you and remove it from your workspace. Turn technology off or onto silent.

## F. OPTIMISE YOUR ENVIRONMENT.

Get yourself a drink and snack. Set the lighting and surround yourself with things that motivate you.





# 6 MOTIVATE & ENCOURAGE YOURSELF

Self-criticism can make you feel demotivated but talking to yourself in an encouraging way can help to motivate you.

What would you to say to encourage a friend, if they were faced with the same task as you?

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-----  
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Try to speak like this to yourself rather than self-criticising.

Here are some techniques that you could try to motivate yourself to do the task. Tick those that you'd like to try.



**EAT THE FROG!**

The worst task, that's the frog. Eat this task up first, to make the rest feel easy in comparison.



**REMEMBER & DO**

Do the task as soon as it pops into your mind.



**5 JUST 5 MINUTES**

Tell yourself that you'll just do 5 minutes of the task. Then see if you can manage 5 more.



**LIMIT TIME!**

Work on the task for a limited amount of time e.g 1 hour only.



**REMINDERS**

Use your phone to set reminders. Or place post-it notes under your nose!



**BEST TIME & PLACE**

Work out when and where you work best. Are you a morning person? Do you prefer to work in a library?



**VISUALISATION**

Picture how you will feel when the task is complete. Visualise things that motivate you.



**REWARD YOURSELF**

The best part! Plan to reward yourself when the task is complete.



**ACCOUNTABILITY**

Find a study buddy or make a study group.



**FOCUS APPS**

Encourage yourself to focus with apps such as Flora or Forest.

## 7 REFLECT & REVISE

When you've practised the previous 6 steps. Look back and reflect on what worked, what didn't and what you can try next.

Are you able to notice when you are procrastinating? What are the warning signs that you are beginning to procrastinate?

Which techniques help you to tolerate discomfort?

Are you very self-critical? Has talking to yourself in a more encouraging way helped? Which self-motivating phrases have worked best?

Is there a step that is consistently causing you to stumble? How could you overcome this?

Have you noticed an unhelpful belief that is particularly problematic? Have you managed to challenge this belief?

Is there a particular excuse that you use a lot? Have you reframed this excuse?

What practical action do you take each time you feel the urge to procrastinate?



SUMMARY OF WHAT WORKS WELL

SUMMARY OF WHAT I COULD IMPROVE ON.



# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

My name is **Laura Wetherill, PhD**. I am an experienced research scientist with interests in the fields of molecular virology and immune cell cycle control. I was an anxious student that battled with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and depression throughout my studies and career. From this experience stems a passion for student wellbeing. My aim through **Doctor Me Clever** is not only to enthuse the next generation of scientists with the power of visual language but to also support their mental health. Through collaboration with licensed marriage and family therapist Kimberley Quinlan, I hope to help students face the overwhelming thoughts and emotions that the pressures of education may bring.



**Laura Wetherill, PhD**

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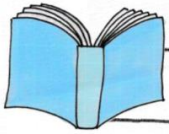


**Kimberley Quinlan, LMFT**

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My name is **Kimberley Quinlan, LMFT**. My biggest goal is to help others face their fears. We live in a world where we are taught to run away from fear, take away our pain and remove discomfort. However, I have found that we only know our true strengths by staring our fear right in the eyes. My hope is to support Laura in her mission to help students learn while also making space for their fears and emotions. **It is a beautiful day to do hard things!**

## RESOURCES



### BOOKS

#### Mindfulness

**Mindfulness: A practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world.**

By Mark Williams and Dr Danny Penman

<https://amzn.to/2WZRSVD>



### APPS

#### List-making

Trello: <https://trello.com>

#### Scheduling

iCal: <https://support.apple.com/downloads/ical>

Google Calendar: <https://calendar.google.com/calendar>

#### Meditation

Headspace: [https:// www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app](https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app)

Insight Timer: <https://insighttimer.com>

Calm: <https://www.calm.com>

#### Focus

Flora: <https://flora.appfinca.com>

Forest: <https://www.forestapp.cc>



### ARTICLES

#### Procrastination

Gustavo Razzetti. **How to Overcome Procrastination (Starting Now)**, Psychology Today, Jan 2019

Elizabeth Lombardo Ph.D, **11 Ways to Overcome Procrastination**. Psychology Today, Mar 2017

<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Procrastination>



# PROCRASTINATION BUSTER

## MY TO DO LIST

### TASKS



(List all the tasks you'd like to complete in any order)



### PRIORITY LEVEL



(Number from 1 – 12)



# PROCRASTINATION BUSTER

TASK



"I am aware that I have an urge to procrastinate. I am going to be kind to myself and non-judgemental. I will make space for the discomfort that I feel and take positive steps towards getting the task at hand started."



UNHELPFUL BELIEF



CHALLENGED BELIEF



I WILL TOLERATE THE DISCOMFORT BY...



I can't...

MY EXCUSE



REFRAMED EXCUSE

I CAN!

BENEFITS OF COMPLETING THE TASK



DISTRACTIONS



I'LL OPTIMISE MY ENVIRONMENT BY...



ACCOUNTABILITY



# PROCRASTINATION BUSTER

## TASK



I will prioritise and break the task down into smaller, realistic and manageable goals.

The first thing that I can do to get started is .....



## Manageable Goals

1. GOAL .....

.....

Date ..... Time .....

Reward .....

Completed

2. GOAL .....

.....

Date ..... Time .....

Reward .....

Completed

3. GOAL .....

.....

Date ..... Time .....

Reward .....

Completed

4. GOAL .....

.....

Date ..... Time .....

Reward .....

Completed

5. GOAL .....

.....

Date ..... Time .....

Reward .....

Completed

6. GOAL .....

.....

Date ..... Time .....

Reward .....

Completed

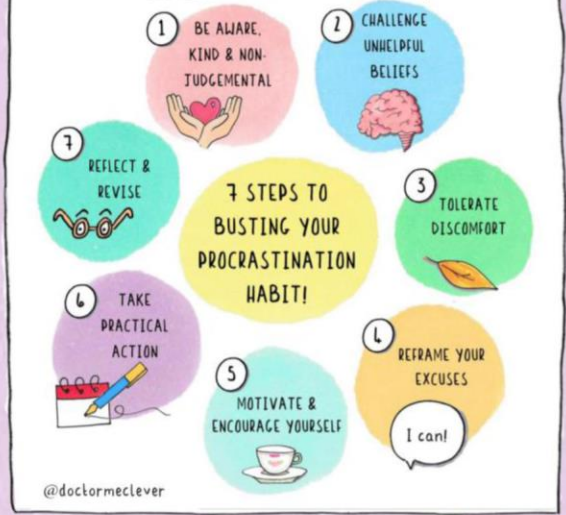
WHAT WORKED WELL?

WHAT CAN I TRY NEXT?

## PROCRASTINATION



## 7 STEPS



## TOLERATING DISCOMFORT



## PRACTISING MINDFULNESS CAN HELP YOU TO...



## A RECIPE FOR PROCRASTINATION

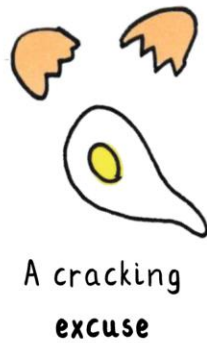


## A RECIPE FOR DOING

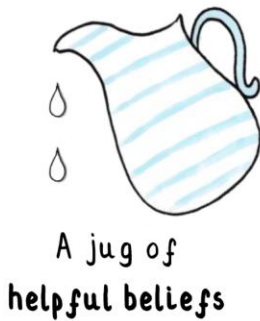




## A RECIPE FOR PROCRASTINATION



## A RECIPE FOR DOING



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