**Overcoming Procrastination**

Often, the key is to figure out why you’re procrastinating, and that’s different for everyone. Here are some general hints.

Remember our goal acronym, SMART. Set new goals often. When you break down a big task (“write chapter 4”) into smaller chunks, it’s easier to motivate yourself to get to work to do “one little task” to cross off the list.

Where do you work and how does that influence whether you can get started/stay focused? Easily distracted at home – go to campus. Chat in your office w/colleagues? Go to the Library.

Set a time when you know you’re at your best. But, don’t set yourself up to fail by making it 8am if you’re not a morning person. Developing a routine can help to overcome procrastination because you get in a rhythm (or rut) of writing every day at x time.

Schedule breaks. If you balk because the idea of a four-hour writing session sounds overwhelming, break it up. Write for 2 hours, then a ten-minute time out to Alpine to get an iced tea, then back for another 2hours. And that leads to another hint: have a reward handy. I get an iced tea if I write for two hours, or I can go to Zumba class at 5 if I work from 3 to 5.

Know that you don’t have to produce perfection in every writing session. On days we’re feeling uninspired, it’s doubly hard to get motivated. We’ve done some strategies for helping you look at your topic differently: play around with them. Or free write if you’re blocked. Check your task list for things that you can do that are still productive: verifying citations, printing out an article, formatting a chart differently, whatever. Give yourself permission in writing sessions to know that not every single session will be productive of page after page of glorious prose.

Stop when you’re on a roll. Finishing a writing session in mid-paragraph (or even mid-sentence) can make you excited about getting back to write because you’ll be able to just jump in. Of course, you can sketch in what else you want to say before you stop: next I’m going to draw comparisons to X, Y, and Z and then bring in the theories regarding Q and S to explain these events….

For more information, see our handout <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/procrastination/>