

THE JOURNAL FOUNDRY CO.

FREE SAMPLE

The Procrastination Journal

The opening pages and the first three days, exactly
as they are in the full journal.

Print single-sided on A4 or US Letter, or fill it in on a tablet with
any PDF markup app.

Do the opening page before the first log. It takes five minutes,
and the logs mean very little without it.

If the three days work for you, the full journal carries on from
exactly where this stops.

A self-help record, not medical, psychological or financial advice, and not a diagnosis.
Interior written and laid out with AI assistance and edited by hand. Quotations are public
domain.

Free for personal use. Please share the link rather than the file:
thejournalfoundryco.co.uk/journals/procrastination/

How This Journal Works

This is not a productivity planner and it will not ask you to feel motivated. Procrastination is rarely a time problem. It is a mood problem: you put a task off because starting it feels bad now, and the relief of not starting is immediate. The cost arrives later, so it never gets counted. Research on procrastination describes this as short-term mood repair at the expense of long-term goals (Sirois & Pychyl, 2013).

The fix is not to feel better first. It is to build a record that shows what starting actually costs, versus what you predicted. Every day for thirty days you do one thing: pick a task you are avoiding and start it for one minute. Not finish. Start. Then you log what happened.

THE FIVE PARTS

The Start Contract	a signed page naming what avoidance has cost you and the one rule for the next 30 days.
30 Start Logs	under two minutes each: the task, the story you told yourself, your dread forecast, the one minute, what happened after, the actual feeling, and a Start Score from 1 to 5.
4 Weekly Checkpoints	on Days 7, 14, 21 and 28: count your starts, compare forecast against actual, name the excuse that keeps recurring.
The Verdict	on Day 30 you read the record back and state, in one line, what it proves.
The Excuse List	one reference page: the eight stories procrastination tells, and what your own log will say about each.

THE TWO NUMBERS THAT MATTER

Dread forecast: before you start, rate 1 to 10 how unpleasant you expect the first minute to be. Actual: after the minute, rate how unpleasant it was. Thirty pairs of numbers are the evidence. Almost everyone finds the second number is lower than the first, almost every time. Once you have seen that in your own handwriting thirty times, the story that starting will be unbearable stops working on you.

Undated, so a missed day costs nothing. Skip it and take the next page. The record only needs to be honest, not perfect.

"In the morning, when thou risest unwillingly, let this thought be present: I am rising to the work of a human being."

— Marcus Aurelius, Meditations V.1 (tr. George Long, 1862)

The Start Contract

Fill this in before the first log. It is the page you will read back on Day 30.

WHAT AVOIDANCE HAS BEEN COSTING ME (work, money, sleep, relationships, self-respect)

THE THREE TASKS I HAVE BEEN PUTTING OFF LONGEST, AND FOR HOW LONG

1.

2.

3.

THE RULE FOR THE NEXT 30 DAYS

Every day I pick one task I am avoiding and start it for one minute. Not finish. Start. I write down what I predicted, what I did, and what actually happened. I do not need to feel ready. I need to start the clock.

THE FIRST TASK I WILL START TOMORROW, AND THE FIRST PHYSICAL ACTION (open the file, put on shoes, dial)

SIGNED

DATE

"Never leave that till to-morrow which you can do to-day."

— Benjamin Franklin, Poor Richard's Almanack (1742)

Day 01

DATE _____

THE TASK I AM AVOIDING TODAY

THE STORY I AM TELLING MYSELF ABOUT WHY NOT NOW

DREAD FORECAST how unpleasant will the first minute be? 1 = nothing 10 = unbearable

THE ONE MINUTE

Started at _____ : _____ The first physical action I took:

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE MINUTE (stopped, kept going, finished, got pulled away)

ACTUAL how unpleasant was it, really? 1 to 10

MINUTES TOTAL

START SCORE

1

2

3

4

5

- 1 Avoided it all day
- 2 Started for one minute, then stopped
- 3 Kept going past the minute
- 4 A real work session
- 5 Finished it, or the story was proven wrong

TOMORROW: THE TASK, AND THE FIRST PHYSICAL ACTION

"Do not put your work off till to-morrow and the day after; for a sluggish worker does not fill his barn."

— Hesiod, Works and Days (c. 700 BC; tr. H. G. Evelyn-White, 1914)

Day 02

DATE _____

THE TASK I AM AVOIDING TODAY

THE STORY I AM TELLING MYSELF ABOUT WHY NOT NOW

DREAD FORECAST how unpleasant will the first minute be? 1 = nothing 10 = unbearable

THE ONE MINUTE

Started at _____ : _____ The first physical action I took:

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE MINUTE (stopped, kept going, finished, got pulled away)

ACTUAL how unpleasant was it, really? 1 to 10

MINUTES TOTAL

START SCORE

1

2

3

4

5

- 1 Avoided it all day
- 2 Started for one minute, then stopped
- 3 Kept going past the minute
- 4 A real work session
- 5 Finished it, or the story was proven wrong

TOMORROW: THE TASK, AND THE FIRST PHYSICAL ACTION

"Procrastination is the thief of time."

— Edward Young, Night Thoughts, Night I (1742)

Day 03

DATE _____

THE TASK I AM AVOIDING TODAY

THE STORY I AM TELLING MYSELF ABOUT WHY NOT NOW

DREAD FORECAST how unpleasant will the first minute be? 1 = nothing 10 = unbearable

THE ONE MINUTE

Started at _____ : _____ The first physical action I took:

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE MINUTE (stopped, kept going, finished, got pulled away)

ACTUAL how unpleasant was it, really? 1 to 10

MINUTES TOTAL

START SCORE

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TOMORROW: THE TASK, AND THE FIRST PHYSICAL ACTION

"While we are postponing, life speeds by."

— Seneca, Letters to Lucilius I (tr. R. M. Gummere, 1917)

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THAT WAS THE FIRST THREE DAYS

The rest of The Procrastination Journal

30 starts, four weekly checkpoints, the Verdict and the
Excuse List.

A few days of this is a sample. The part that changes anything is keeping it going long enough for the numbers to mean something, and that is what the checkpoints and the verdict are for.

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Paperback

amazon.co.uk/dp/B0HJP8QHXQ

How it works, and the method in full

thejournalfoundryco.co.uk/journals/procrastination/

Questions, or want it for a team? Write to kzukas@thejournalfoundryco.co.uk. One reply, from a person.