A task initiation worksheet for adults and children

Published: 2026-10-25

Five minutes is a voluntary starting experiment, not a universal psychological rule. An adult can help a child choose a clear step; the trial may be shorter. Agree that stopping after the trial is allowed, then decide when to continue. The table gives a completed example and space for your own task. Afterwards record what helped and what obstructed you. Original reminders: “A draft gives me something to revise”; “Starting can be smaller than I imagine.” These are not quotations from famous people.

Name / project: _____

Fill the blank rows with your own examples.

Defining procrastination and bedtime procrastination

Procrastination is delaying an intended action while expecting the delay to make matters worse. Rescheduling for a more urgent responsibility is different. For a child: “I meant to begin my homework, but keep choosing something else and then struggle to finish.” This describes behaviour, not a diagnosis or proof of a disorder. If the difficulty regularly disrupts school, work or sleep, discuss the cause with an appropriate professional rather than infer it from one label.

Bedtime procrastination means going to bed later than intended without an external circumstance preventing it. For example, you planned to close your feed at 10:30 but continued scrolling. Being unable to fall asleep after going to bed is a different question. Record your intended screen stopping time, the obstacle and one change for tomorrow; do not compensate by depriving yourself of sleep.

Original procrastination self-check, without a diagnostic scale: answer yes or no. Did I intend to start? Did I delay without a more important reason? Did I expect difficulties from delaying? Did this recur? Three initial yes answers suggest reviewing one episode with the worksheet below. The fourth helps decide whether to observe a week. This does not establish a disorder or severity.

Perfectionism, procrastination and research

Perfectionism and procrastination are different concepts. High standards can prompt work, while fear of mistakes can prolong preparation. Test a concrete example: “I am withholding my draft to avoid any criticism.” Define a minimum: audience, main conclusion and three facts; then schedule a separate checking pass.

In a nine-month study of 183 preservice teachers, links between perfectionistic striving and well-being varied with procrastination and context. In a cross-sectional survey of 255 medical and dental students, anxiety was associated with procrastination while perfectionism components did not predict it. This does not establish causation or an individual diagnosis. Psychological distress cannot be reduced to a flawed character, and a worksheet cannot replace professional support.

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Field	Example	Your version
Task	Prepare a presentation	
First action	Open a file and write one main point	
Trial and conditions	Five minutes after lunch, phone away	
Next step	Add one example or schedule continuation	

Sources

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