

HOW TO FIGHT PROCRASTINATION

Try to work 50 to 60 minutes at a time when studying. Then leave your study area, and take a 10 to 15 minute break. Do something you find fun to do during this break. Once your break period is over, go back to your study area and start the process over again. Continue using this method until you have finished your work or until fatigue sets in (as a rule of thumb **don't** study more than three to four hours in a row). After a block of study hours, reward yourself for an hour or so, return to your study area and start the process over if you still have work to do. If you don't have further studying to do, just go about your usual routine.

If you still have trouble concentrating, try the following:

- a) When your mind starts to wander say to yourself, "Stop! Get back to work."
- b) If after trying the above two or three times, and your mind still wonders, take a short two or three minute break.
- c) Try to study longer and longer periods between breaks, until you can study about an hour without a break.

If you still have problems concentrating, try Alen Lakein's (1973) Swiss Cheese method. When you think of some homework assignment, do it as soon as you think of it. Even if you only do part of it you will be putting a hole in the block of studying you have to do (thus the Swiss Cheese method). Besides, you are usually the most prepared to do something the moment you think of it--so when you think of it do it!

You may want to try Lakein's ABC Priority System when trying to decide what classes to prepare for. Assignments that are due within the next few days would receive an A, or high priority. Those assignments that are not so pressing would receive a B, or lower priority. Finally, those assignments that are optional would receive the letter C, or the lowest priority.

If you are still plagued by procrastination, think about the following statements by Jane B. Burka and Lenora M. Yuen (1982): "Learning to manage time better is not the cure for chronic procrastination. The only way to get down to work is to understand the real motives of sloughing off...The work of habitual postponers reflects not their true ability but brinkmanship. It demonstrates how well they can pull things together under pressure...doing too well. Or they are rebelling--indirectly--against authority. For some procrastinators, any rule or schedule represents a battle to be won or lost. Adhering to someone else's time schedule mean losing...Most procrastinators value only the finished product of their efforts. They don't see that intermediate step can also bring a sense of accomplishment." What is your excuse?