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### Procrastination Cure

**Reporter:** Vassil Malandris

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**Putting things off is one of our greatest diseases. Something from which- be honest, we all suffer.**

Whether it's the ironing or the filing, doing the tax or telling your partner you've double booked your anniversary dinner, there will always be things we have to do and yet we go out of our way to avoid them

But what if there was a cure for our procrastinating ways ... right now!

Well according to behavioural therapist Hugh Kearns and clinical psychiatrist Maria Gardiner, there is.

"I think the answer is yes there is. There are probably a variety of cures" Hugh says

Hugh and Maria here at Flinders University have been picking the brains of everyone from business leaders to athletes and even stay-at-home mums in order to challenge the way we postpone those unpleasant or unavoidable tasks

"We like to think of it as an iceberg model and so you've got the tip of the iceberg and that's the behaviour and then you've got what's underneath the iceberg and that's all the thoughts and doubts and concerns that you've got under there" Maria explains

It's this iceberg model which they say has helped these PHD students achieve more in 6 weeks than they'd got around to in the previous 6 months

"I've been writing a lot more than what I was so it's been very good!" one student says

They even claim to have helped a local business owner increase his profits by two fold

Hugh and Maria say it's all about breaking down a task which you might think is too big and daunting into baby steps

"One of the keys is to make it a very small activity something very small and manageable that you can do and then probably give yourself some reward for doing that and then pick the next task. It's seems very small but if you put those small steps together then you begin to achieve the task" Hugh says

However if you don't get the job done, replace that reward with a punishment like not going out to dinner or to the movies.

Once you get the hang of it, they say you'll be surprised by how quickly your doubts and fears turn into action and success

There's sort of a common misconception that we need to feel motivated to do things... if you begin to take that action it leads to motivation which leads to more action" Maria says

"When you do something that you've been putting off and that's been hanging around for a long time then you just feel a lot lighter and a lot more positive and that gives you more energy to take on more challenges" Hugh adds

It's that infectious positive energy which Hugh and Maria say makes their job all the more worthwhile.

**Hugh Kearns and Maria Gardiner can be contacted at Flinders University on 8201 3699**

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