

How to Procrastinate (yes, there IS a right way!)

by Chazda Hill -

<http://greatstorybook.com/how-to-procrastinate/>

This entry is part 9 of 10 in the series [My Storybook Process](#)

[My Storybook Process](#)

- [My Storybook Process \(Part 1\): creating a new thing](#)
- [My Storybook Process \(Part 2\): creating new characters](#)
- [My Storybook Process \(Part 3\): creating the story](#)
- [My Storybook Process \(Part 4\): creating the manuscript for a children's book](#)
- [My Storybook Process \(Part 5\): creating rising action](#)
- [My Storybook Process \(Part 6\): um... now I'm a procrastinating writer *ahem](#)
- [My Storybook Process \(Part 7\): creating an ending](#)
- [How to Stay Motivated to Finish Your Story: 7 ways](#)
- How to Procrastinate (yes, there IS a right way!)
- [Falling Hard and Writing Anyway](#)

If you're going to procrastinate working on a certain writing project, there is a really good and proper way to go about doing that. Here's exactly what you need to do.

When we hit a wall in our writing, the tendency is to do almost anything else at all because facing that obstacle head-on seems so worrisome it makes our head throb to even think of picking up a pen or booting up the computer. This is not good. This is writer death.

The pen is mightier than the sword (and this man has both). Here the highly respected individual is a writer. I like this picture.

That wall can come at any time during the crafting of a story, but it tends to come at certain key moments: the character needs to take action and you're not sure what it should be, you can't write the first fantastic sentence, or you don't know how to end the story. The writing wall can even fall smack on your head at the simplest of times, like establishing a [character's family tree](#) (which can actually become quite a task).

Writers need to write. So you need to pick up that pen or boot up that computer and do it. But how do you procrastinate on a writing project and remain a writer?

You write something else.

The absolute best way to overcome the writer's wall is to divert your imagination with another shiny new idea you would love to develop. No need to feel guilty. [You're a writer – but only so long as you're actually writing.](#)

The most prolific writers take this particular tack when it comes to “hitting a wall” in the creative process. Here is the cycle you can take when faced with the wall.

Two projects, one form. First, establish two main projects that you want to tackle at the same time. That means two complete fictional stories. I recommend keeping within the same basic form of writing (write two scripts, or two novels, for example). The reason for this is that your mind is structurally in the zone for that one format. If you're already a pro and different writing forms don't phase you, flipping around between a novel and a script is no big deal. But a novice should choose one form and stick with it for a while.

Two projects, two genres. If you like to write in different genres, there's no problem bouncing around between two totally different ones at the same time. In fact, it keeps things much simpler, because it means you'll never run into the problem of accidentally placing a character from one story into the other story you're writing. By choosing to write, for example, a historical drama and a sci-fi thriller, you can more easily separate the ways those stories feel in your mind, so what plot points and characters you associate with a given project will stay where they ought to be.

Warning! One thing you should never do (at least, what I would never do) is write sequential stories at once. Do not write the first part of a story and its sequel at the same time. You will very quickly find that hell would be a better place to dwell.

Kick off the first shoe. Start out with one of the main projects – whichever one you feel more compelled to work on at that moment. Create your [character profiles](#), plot out a primary story and a secondary story, and just keep going until you hit a wall. If you just can't budge an inch forward and you feel sure you've given it enough thought (however much thought it took for you to even for a moment think that doing the dishes would be preferable to writing), start working on the second project.

Wash, rinse, repeat. Go with the second project and work it until you hit a wall. Rushing to the dentist sounds enticing? Switch back to project one.

What if you feel like you need a break from both of these? Do not stop writing. You can take a break from both, but do not break the writing momentum. Write an article, write a fantastic letter to someone you love, but write something. Anything.

Go outside and breathe fresh air. Get out of your home and write in a journal about what you see, smell, taste. Make writing one of the sightseeing events you plan. Go to a shop and buy a gorgeous blank

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book and two brand new pens. Go to a lovely café with a view or a great ambience or both. Just write whatever comes to mind. It doesn't have to be beautiful.

In fact, here is your task: take that gorgeous blank book and do your worst. *Mess it up, thoroughly.* Scribble in it, write swear words, but fill the page. Try to write a really bad poem. Do it. You'll find that whatever you try to devise as the worst of your writing ability will be, despite yourself, interesting in some way. I DEFY you to write something worthless.

Don't Doubt Yourself. Do not make the mistake of underestimating your ability to remain [creatively productive](#) even when you don't feel like doing much of anything at all. Don't stop. Just switch it up a bit. When you finish that writing project you've been thinking about for SO long you don't even know how long anymore, you won't have just that gem project done. You'll have two main projects and a smattering of others as well – all at once.

Procrastinate in this manner, and you will amaze yourself with what you can really do.

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