

Hitting Bottom, Procrastination, and Self-Correction

Learn to fight procrastination when kicking an addiction.

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Abusing substances and procrastinating on corrective actions is a recipe for disaster. When these thieves of life and time combine, you can feel yourself spiraling down.

Let's start with whether you need to hit bottom before making a course correction. Then we'll look at some basics for liberating yourself from a combination of procrastination forms that can keep your addiction habit active. Following this innovative angle, we'll look at what you can do if you suffer from this dual affliction.

Hitting Bottom

Hitting rock bottom generally means that before you can recover you may have to hit bottom first. That is to say, you found your life unmanageable and out of control. But must you hit bottom before you can change? University of Texas Health Scientist Craig Field and his colleagues found that hitting bottom is not necessary. People with less emotional stress and fewer severe problems showed greater motivation to kick their addictive habits.

If you realize that you need to change, then this belief is clear enough. You don't have to assume that you need to lose practically everything before you can bounce back. An epiphany may do. You suddenly see your life in a downward spiral. You have a leap in awareness. You see the importance of reversing course. The strength of your expectations for change can ignite self-correction.

This radical shift largely depends on your belief that you can self-correct. You can learn to correct addictive thinking. You can build tolerance for consumptive urges and resiliently resist them. You can act *as if* you could stay abstinent and make this a self-fulfilling prophesy. As you master actions to break these parts of an addictive cycle, you buffer yourself against lapses and relapses. You don't need to hit bottom first to do this.

You can stretch credulity and argue that hitting bottom universally comes before changing. Even an epiphany or near accident is the same as hitting bottom. This idea is so overly inclusive that we might consider it a rhetorical fallacy.

Some will find hitting bottom relevant. If you suffered from years of abusing your favorite substance(s), and you have put yourself--and others--through appalling ordeals, you may gear up to quit. Believe that you have nowhere to go but up, and the idea that you've hit bottom can motivate self-correcting actions for making a healthy life for yourself.

Psychologist David Wechsler, who invented a test that uses his name, valued the word *sometimes*. Does procrastination *sometimes* hinder overcoming an addiction? We'll turn to procrastination next.

Does Procrastination Get In The Way?

You say you'll quit smoking after your next pack. Later you make the same promise to yourself. You say you'll cut back on your drinking after you're less stressed. This type of thinking suggests that procrastination is part of your addictive pattern.

A pressured drive to consume and procrastination on quitting are a toxic medley. You know what an addictive pressure feels like. You may not pay attention to the pressure from procrastination. Nevertheless, this is like a double wammy. Learn to stop procrastinating on kicking an addiction and you can get a twofer benefit: you end the toxic medley. Let's look at an addiction process that is complicated by *combination procrastination*.

Combination procrastination typically gets in the way of kicking an addictive habit. This is where two or more forms of procrastination work together and interfere with a priority. The following sample procrastination forms may occur in different combinations and interfere with achieving abstinence.

1. You give yourself flimsy excuses that you are under too much stress now to quit. That's why you need Percocet. You'll quit later when you're relaxed. This *tomorrow illusion* is a classic procrastination diversion.
2. You barter with yourself about how much you'll use before you'll abstain. In dithering back and forth with yourself, you procrastinate on making a decision.
3. Anxiety about discomfort can trigger *discomfort-dodging procrastination*. You drink to avoid discomfort. You put off learning coping skills to build tolerance for discomfort. This combination can prolong itself.
4. You refuse to overcome your addiction now. You tell yourself you are giving up your freedom to drink, so you need to stand up for your drinking rights. You claim you need to drink to relax. You whine that you'll miss the good times drinking with your buddies. That's an example of *reactance procrastination*, or resistance against a fictional loss of privilege or freedom.
5. *Pileup procrastination* refers to letting your priorities pile up. You have a closet addiction. You've been so busy with your addictivities (securing and using) that you feel overwhelmed by what you've left undone; you're falling behind. To calm down you drink or use. We know where that gets you.

Let's see how different forms of procrastination can combine. Reactance and discomfort-dodging procrastination can jointly contribute to an addiction medley. You refuse to quit because you believe you lose a privilege. You won't quit until you are comfortable. You can deal with combination procrastination and your addiction(s) simultaneously. Start with a short- and long-term analysis of *abusing* versus *quitting*. When the benefits of quitting exceed the benefits of abusing, this may be a tipping point to start liberating yourself from this deadly medley. (If you want to learn more about the procrastination-addiction connection, see: [Overcome-addictions-and-procrastination-simultaneously.](#))

Can You Self-Correct?

In 1974, psychologist Lee Robins found that a large number of returning Vietnam veterans quit a heroin addiction on their own. Once off the battlefield, their stress dropped dramatically. The vets rose from the bottom before they quit. Robins' 1993 follow-up showed a low re-addiction rate. A sub-group, however, switched from heroin to alcohol or less expensive drugs.

The literature is growing about people overcoming addictive habits without formal treatment. University of Lubeck professor Hans Rumpf and his colleagues found that between 2/3 and 3/4 who stopped abusing alcohol succeeded without formal help. Those who were successful were likely to be alcohol abusers.

Can you self-correct on your own? You can if you feel determined to quit. You may use willpower to start. Applying evidence-based cognitive, emotive, and behavioral coping skills, you can progressively improve your ability to both kick your habit and *to feel and do better after you abstain*.

Must you do everything on your own? Formal help is an option, especially if you suffer from a tenacious blend of a negative mood, substance abuse, anxiety, and procrastination. You may profit from a mixture of professional help, a self-help group, a peer partner, or by taking other corrective actions. For example, a medical detox center is critical for detoxing from alcohol dependency (not occasional binge drinking) and preferable when you seek to kick an opiate dependency.

Do something to improve your life by ridding yourself of a needless addictive burden. If you want more individual techniques to self-correct, or a source for group support, go to: smartrecovery.org.

If you want to learn more about correcting procrastination, see:

[End-Procrastination-Now-Psychological-Approach](#)

[Procrastination-Workbook-Personalized-Breaking-Patterns](#)

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