Procrastination Elimination Strategies

- **Time-Telling:**
  - Procrastinators have difficulty estimating the time needed to complete tasks. For the most part, they underestimate the time necessary to perform a task. Practice estimating time needed to complete tasks and compare the accuracy of your estimation.

- **Prompts/Reminder Notes:**
  - Use physical reminder notes (e.g., Post-it notes) placed in specific locations to remind you to finish a particular task. For example, place a note on a bathroom mirror.

- **Reinforcement:**
  - Make an agreement with yourself that after a period of working on a task, you will reinforce yourself. For example, “If I study for 50 minutes, I will call my girlfriend or boyfriend or eat some ice cream.”

- **The Bits-and-Pieces Approach:**
  - Set a goal to work on a task for a short period of time. For example, rather than ignore a paper assignment, commit to completing one or two pages per day.

- **The 5-Minute Plan:**
  - Agree to work on a task for 5 minutes. At the end of 5 minutes, decide whether you will work on it for another 5 minutes. Often momentum builds as you near the end of the first 5 minutes, so you want to maintain your focus on the task.

- **The 80% Success Rule:**
  - Don’t expect to go from “total non-completion” to “total completion” of all tasks. Instead, take a realistic approach by setting a goal to complete at least 80% of the task. Give yourself some reinforcement when you reach this goal and plan the completion of the final 20% of the task.

- **Social Support for Task Completion:**
  - Work with students who tend to complete tasks. These individuals can serve as positive modes instead of fellow procrastinators who help maintain procrastination.

- **Establish a Set Time for a Routine:**
  - Setting a precise time during the day for completing a task can help you get it done. For example, deciding to exercise soon after you wake up can help you establish regular exercise behavior.

- **Modify the Environment:**
  - Your working environment can directly influence procrastination. For example, if you need to complete some reading or write a short paper, a room with a stereo, TV, or bed may not be the best place to begin and sustain motivation to complete the task. Changing the setting by going to another room in your home or going to the library where you may find fewer distractions can help you focus on the task.

*Source: Ellis & Knaus, 1977; Ferrari, 2001 as cited in Dembo & Seli 2008*