“Nothing is so fatiguing as the eternal hanging on of an uncompleted task.”
~William James

Can you relate the quotation above? Doesn’t procrastination wear you out? It does me. And as a psychologist I KNOW the reasons for my procrastination – yet I still have struggled with it. Here’s an example. This is a picture of my shirt, taken a few years ago. As you can see in the circled area, a button is missing. For 2 months I looked at that shirt on my dresser morning and night. In total, I must have spent almost an hour thinking about sewing the button and feeling guilty that I hadn’t.

Finally one evening I decided to sew on the button. Just for fun, I clocked how long it took - less than five minutes, including the time to find a needle and thread! In other words I had spent way more time thinking about the task than actually doing it. Sound familiar? Procrastination is a universal problem. It does waste time. But more importantly, it’s very stressful. It drains your energy, undermines your creativity, and inconveniences others.

So why do we procrastinate?
Procrastination is not a problem of time management. We sometimes try to convince ourselves that there’s not enough time to get started, or that we do our best work under pressure. But these are just excuses. Nor is procrastination an indicator of laziness. Procrastinators are often overly conscientious, although they have trouble acting on their good intentions.
The real reason we procrastinate is that it gives us instant gratification. Here’s what happens in your mind: When thinking about the task that you have to do, you start to feel tense or anxious. That’s normal. Now the logical next step would be to do the task and get it over with. However, it’s much easier and more convenient to promise yourself you’ll do it later - which makes you feel better instantly, without lifting a finger! Unfortunately, that sense of relief lasts only a short time, because you have to face your unfinished task over and over again - each time feeling a bit worse about the task and about yourself. Eventually there’s no relief at all.

How to stop procrastinating

• The secret to beating procrastination is to break through your psychological resistance. Recognize the tension for what it is, but don’t allow it to control you.

• Think about the task as “I choose to do it,” (not “I have to do it”). You’re more committed to that which you do voluntarily.

• Plan to work only 15 minutes at a time. You can do almost anything for 15 minutes, can’t you? It takes about that long for your inner tension to subside. At the end of 15 minutes, you can choose to continue for another 15 minutes. But even if you don’t, you’ve accomplished something toward your goal.

• Procrastination is a learned habit. You can retrain that habit. Like any other training, it takes practice. No one can guarantee that you’ll never procrastinate again, but with practice, you’ll get more done and feel better about yourself.

See more at:
http://www.yourmindyourbody.org/procrastination-why-you-do-it-and-how-to-stop/#sthash.2YZYQS1M.dpuf