

Low Motivation & Procrastination

Understanding avoidance, task friction, shame, and ways to make starting easier.

Why starting can be hard

Low motivation can be influenced by depression, anxiety, ADHD, perfectionism, burnout, sleep problems, grief, or simply a task that feels unclear or unrewarding. Procrastination often reduces discomfort now while increasing stress later.

Reduce the start-up cost

- Define the next physical action, not the whole project.
- Set a five-minute start rather than waiting for motivation.
- Remove one source of friction: gather materials, silence notifications, or choose a simpler location.
- Use a timer or body double for tasks that are hard to initiate.
- Reward completion of the start, not only the entire project.

Address the story

Notice thoughts such as “I should be able to do this,” “If I cannot do it perfectly, why start?” or “I work better under pressure.” Treat them as hypotheses rather than commands.

Try this reflection

What is the smallest visible action that would count as starting?

Using this resource: For education and skill-building only; not diagnosis, medical advice, or crisis care. If you feel overwhelmed, pause and seek appropriate professional support. In the U.S., call or text 988 for crisis support; call 911 for an immediate emergency.