

Strategy

4 ways you're making your job harder than it needs to be

Procrastinating on difficult tasks and missing out on collaboration are some of the ways you may be making your life harder at work. Here are four ways you're making your job harder than it needs to be, and how to fix them.

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If going into work feels like slogging through mud, you may be making your job (and your life) harder than it needs to be.

When you're struggling with your career, everything in life can feel out of whack, and your feelings can snowball until you *really* hate work. Such a situation can lead to **burnout**, weak job performance, and eventually, getting fired or **needing to quit**.

But almost any situation on the job can be improved if you just get out of your own way.

Here are four ways you're making your job harder than it needs to be, and how to fix them:

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You're putting off tackling difficult tasks



You're putting off tackling difficult tasks (Jacob Lund/Shutterstock)

As best-selling author and time management expert [Brian Tracy](#) wrote, "Start with the biggest, hardest, and most important task first."

The concept, also known as "eating a frog," is said to have come from Mark Twain. If you eat a frog first thing in the morning, you can generally be sure that it's the worst thing you'll have to do all day. Once you have accomplished this, the other tasks won't seem as difficult, and it should be smooth sailing for the rest of the day.

Look at your to-do list every day and figure out the most difficult things on the list. Get them done and out of the way right off the bat. Don't procrastinate — that will just prolong your suffering, reduce your productivity, and get in your way until you have finished it.

You isolate yourself instead of reaching out for help



You isolate yourself instead of reaching out for help (Sebastiaan ter Burg/Flickr)

You can't do it all yourself, and you will get more done if you trust your colleagues and direct reports to take on some of the work.

Inga Beale, chief executive at Lloyd's of London, told the [New York Times](#) in 2017 that her secret to success is to "surround yourself with the best people you can find and empower them."

You may feel that you can do everything better than anyone else, but let go of some of your perfectionism to allow someone else's way to be good enough. And if they fail — that's the best way to learn, right? Find a way to work *with* the people around you, rather than feeling threatened by them.

According to a [study](#) from Stanford University, just the feeling of working together with others can increase motivation when working alone and help turn "work into play."

Working together not only increases the enjoyment of work, but it can also improve workplace relationships, which in turn can improve trust, foster greater creativity, and even improve your health.

You struggle with indecision



You struggle with indecision (David Hall/flickr)

If you have decisions to make at work, and you spend time agonizing over finding the very best choice in a situation, you can drive yourself crazy. You could also be setting yourself up for more misery later.

As Tim Herrera, the founding editor of Smarter Living, [wrote](#) in the New York Times, trying to find the absolute best choice may lead to "indecision, regret and even lower levels of happiness." People who insist on finding the absolute best solution to a problem tend to be less satisfied with their choices than people who make quicker decisions.

Try to make a good decision, one where you will be fine with the outcome. Then move on to other tasks. You'll waste less time and feel better, too.

You make your life all about work



You make your life all about work (REUTERS/Lucas Jackson)

When you spend time away from your work, you come back to it refreshed and with new perspectives.

Keep a barrier between your "off" self and your work self, and get some balance in your life. A [study](#) by researchers from the University of Pittsburgh found that pleasurable leisure activities improve not just mental health, but physical health as well.

Happy people are more productive workers, as a [study](#) at Warwick University found. With no down time to refresh, you just bring a burned-out shell to work every day, and that burned-out you is making your job harder. Bring a better you to your job, and you'll get more done with ease.



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