Do you tend to procrastinate working on large projects? Do large projects paralyze you and you don’t even know where to start? Do you want to feel like you are making progress towards achieving your goals?

If so, break down your large project into smaller, more manageable tasks. It is easier to work on a short task (30-90 minutes) than on a large project (weeks/months). The following steps will help you break your large project (e.g. paper, lab report, presentation, etc.) into bite-size pieces.

**Step 1: Define milestones**

- Break a large project into monthly, weekly or daily subprojects, aka milestones.
- Define milestones based on different phases or different categories of the project.

**Step 2: Define tasks needed to reach the milestones**

- Define the tasks that need to be done to complete each milestone.
- **Brainstorm** and write down every single step you can think of.
- Use **specific** verbs (e.g., write 300 words, read chapter 3, proofread my draft) to describe your tasks (avoid broad verbs: “do’ or “work on”)

**Step 3: Put those tasks in the right order**

- Think about the logical order of completing those bite-size pieces.
- What should you do first, second, third, etc.?

**Step 4: Add the tasks to your calendar**

- Ask yourself for each step, how long will this take me?
- Overestimate how long each task will take to ensure you have built-in buffer time.
- Ideally, work in sessions between 25 and 90 minutes long. If your list entails steps that might take longer than 90 minutes, try to break them down further.
- Add the small tasks to your calendar, starting at the project due date (or ideally even 2 days before that) and work your way backwards.
- Assign yourself a deadline to each task, which will help you focus.
Example: How to break down a large project into milestones and small tasks (Step 1 and 2)

- Large project: Writing a paper
  - Milestones: Research, Outline, First draft, Revision
  - Small tasks:
    - Meet with professor
    - Meet with librarian
    - Read & take notes
    - Meet with WA
    - Create outline
    - Write introduction
    - State argument A
    - State argument B
    - Conclusion
    - Meet with WA
    - Revise draft
    - Proofread
    - Check formatting