title: **Ever procrastinated so long on a straightforward ticket that it's led to shame-spiraling?**
num_comments: 44
num_up_votes: 228
upvote_ratio: 1.0

Post Text

I have been procrastinating on a ticket for the past week. Every day at standup, I feel ashamed and uncomfortable. I don't even know how to begin to explain to my teammates what the trouble is.   I love the autonomy I have in this job, but I hate how inconsistent I am when nobody is watching me. I don't want to be supervised (and I hate being supervised) but I'm afraid I can't handle myself when left to my own devices. I've suspected ADHD for a while now, but was only recently evaluated by a psychologist, who recommended trying medication. My push to get evaluated was this recent trouble with completing tickets (honestly, they don't take me long after I actually start on them...which makes it even more embarrassing because I'm sure my teammates are confused as to why I keep having excuses). Just posting here for advice and solidarity I guess.

Comments

Commenter_2
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 101
I've been there. For me what helps is going back to basics: write out the steps needed to complete the task, then write substeps, and continue on until the first step is so small it feels silly not to start it.
Usually when I do that I figure out that there's one "scary" step in there that I've been avoiding, like "reach out to another team to clarify xyz" and it helps me work on the less-scary steps first to get my ducks in a row.

Easier said than done, as with all ADHD organizational techniques. But it gets easier with practice!

> ###### Commenter_3
> ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 32
> Breaking the task down helps, but the problem I face is that breaking down the tasks seems like a big task in itself as well so I put it off. The trick I use is to just identify the first step, then break out the absolute most atomic first step of that step, even if it sounds obvious, like "checkout this branch". The point is that it gets the ball rolling and tricks your brain into snapping out of procrastination mode.

>> ###### Commenter_4
>> ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 15
>> Wow, I'm so happy to learn that there's another person who writes checking out a branch as a step to cross off.

>> ###### Commenter_5
>> ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2
>> I'm trying this Monday morning

> ###### Commenter_6
> ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 13
> Great advice. It sometimes also helps to remember that previous times I've been in that situation, once I get started (or past whatever that roadblock is) I usually get into a flow and enjoy the work. The entire experience isn't going to suck, just that initial hump

> ###### Commenter_7

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 6
Same for me, as soon as I find the "scary" step or why it is scary, then I go past it, and enter the flow. The scary step is usually because of a complex mix of "i don't know if I'm right" "what will others think" coupled with years of subtly perceiving I must be doing something wrong. As I have found out, it's not procrastination that's the issue but the avoidance

Unknown_User
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 4
This is genius. It's like a to do list in the task itself.

I'm going to try this tomorrow for the 5 minute ticket I've been putting off for 2 weeks.

Commenter_8
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 27
I think the better question here that would apply to me is, "when haven't you?" lol.

Unknown_User
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 5
I giggled a little too hard at this.

Commenter_9
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 27
...or as I like to call it, ***Business as Usual***.

They all end up being straightforward, except the ones that aren't, then something else completely screws you at the same time.

I'm not even being specific to IT

Edit: the adhd brain lady has a great video called the "wall of awful" or something like that.

Commenter_10
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 20
This has been my day-to-day life for the last twenty years or so - never even began to consider ADHD until my son started down the diagnosis path. I'm a senior engineer, and apparently highly regarded in the organisation for my technical skills.

Here's my typical work day:

Stand up - get assigned a new piece of work.

Start working - know exactly where we need to get to and how to do it.

Before lunch - have no idea how to start.

Lunch - don't need to worry about it, busy eating.

After lunch - have no idea how to start.

Colleague calls - relief, they have a problem that I know exactly how to fix. Look like genius.

Back to work - have no idea how to start. Find something else to do instead.

End of work day - decide I'll just have to work late tonight to catch up.

Evening - far too tired to concentrate on doing anything, give up.

Night - can't sleep with guilt and anxiety about what I'm going to say at next stand-up.

Commenter_7
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 4
This is interesting. I'm 5 months in to coaching with an ADHD coach to resolve exactly that pattern.
So far I can say that knowledge gaps are a source of most of that..

https://open.spotify.com/episode/0I1UrcA9ihAgjZYJcrswZx?si=C86m8bGiQ2ebU5OR8TiDIg&utm_source=copy-link

Commenter_10
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2
This might be true, but I would caution that I'm pretty sure I know more than most of my
colleagues, but still feel like I don't know enough. And even when I absolutely do know enough,
getting started doing it remains impossible. I think that's fairly typical with ADHD. Don't tell
yourself it's ONLY down to knowledge!

Commenter_11
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1
> So far I can say that knowledge gaps are a source of most of that..

I don't disagree, but in my experience so far, my bosses just keep giving me things that are
harder and harder and constantly hit gaps in my knowledge.

Commenter_7
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 3
Yep. I think a neurotypical person can rationalise and cope with that, I just don't know
how...always assume that someone will see me as inferior rather than "hey I don't know
this, cool, let me learn it in a non urgent way" :-)

Commenter_12
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1
That sounds just like me. Hmmm...

Unknown_User
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 16
haha. all the time.

Commenter_13
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 5
(sad, relatable laughter)

Commenter_14
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 7
laughs in ADHD

Commenter_15
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 15
I'm writing this on all those similar threads here, but have you tried pair programming? It works wonders
for me and the other adhd person on my team.

I don't consider it being supervised btw (because you mentioned that), but collaborating on something.

Commenter_16
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 5
100%, not even pair programming but if I just start explaining what I'm supposed to do all the parts of the story that I thought I didn't understand suddenly seem really obvious and I can start

Commenter_17
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 4
100%..I used to hate pair programming, but now it's my most productive way to work

Commenter_18
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2
Just looked into that - I didn't even know it was a thing ! Thanks for mentionning it, this looks awesome !
Any advice on how to introduce it to the team and boss ?
I haven't disclosed my ADHD at work yet btw.

Commenter_15
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 3
I don't really know how to convince a team to start doing it. My current team already did it when I joined, in a previous team the lead was trying to introduce it, but it never really worked well. So there's a chance that some teams simply aren't made for it. If there are people on your team that simply don't want to do it, you'll have a hard time with it.

That being said, there are clear benefits to it that you can try to sell to your team and boss:

It's getting rid of knowledge silos and the need to transfer knowledge amongst the team, as you'll no longer have those systems that only a single person has worked on for years

It helps getting rid of code reviews and pull requests. In my company, a commit is considered reviewed when two devs worked on it. We basically commit to master all the time.

It helps the social aspect of the team. Especially in times of everyone working remotely, I find it incredibly mentally draining to work alone for extended periods of time without any human interaction. Of course you also don't want to be coding nonstop for 8 hours. Make sure to take breaks from each other or from coding and chat for a bit.

I'm probably forgetting quite a bit, but I'm sure that you can find plenty more arguments using Google.

BTW, there's also a thing called mob programming, which means collaborating with 3+ devs and it's supposed to have the same benefits as described above. Unfortunately it's not working for me at all. The moment two people are talking and I'm supposed to follow their conversation I'm completely lost. I always need to be directly involved in the conversation somehow.

Commenter_19
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 14
I have this and almost lost my job because of it. I eventually got evaluated by a physiatrist who gave me the ADHD diagnosis. Standups/scrums are fucking awful most days because of it. My solution, which I workshopped with the company is that I have a WIP list that I complete and submit at the end of each day to a team member which is then used at scrum/standup to evaluate where everything is at. This allows continued autonomy throughout the day but gives me the someone who checks in. My ADHD ass seems to work a little

better knowing someone specific is going to check up on me, which gives me the drive to complete the tasks.

It ain't bulletproof but it's been working for me so far..

Commenter_20
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 9
Oh yes, I experience the same thing all the time. No matter how trivial the task is, I'll sometimes just procrastinate for days, and then when I manage to actually focus and get started properly I figure out the problem and solution in 5 minutes. So then I feel guilt for not just doing the thing much sooner and delaying QA or other developers that may depend on my work. And of course daily standups can be hell because I have no idea what I was doing since the last standup.

Pair programming works great for me, especially if I'm the one sharing my screen because it forces me to be in the moment and think/code quicky so that I keep the other person engaged and don't waste their time.

But of course it's not always an option since other people have their own tasks to do; I can't just constantly ask other developers to be a rubber duck for me.

> ###### Unknown_User
> ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 5
> I don't know how you are with social media, but have you tried coworking on tiktok? There are creators that go live while working and have timers and stuff to make it seem like they are working alongside you. I think they call it body doubling?
>
> ###### Commenter_7
> ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 3
> Recently I started using "Sessions" app on Mac. It's a pomodoro timer with notes. It surprisingly works. So now i feel less guilty in the standup because i can actually see what i was doing yesterday. There is no doubt that i want doing work OR that i wasn't!
>
> ###### Commenter_21
> ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2
> Yep, this is how I do it too. The other guy will push me through the validation process which I loathe, since I hate finishing projects and only complete them to 80% most of the time.

Unknown_User
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 6
Force yourself to work on it for two minutes. Just two minutes. 50 percent chance you'll hyper focus and finish the whole thing. Starting is the hardest part.

Commenter_22
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 6
I do this all the time. I get anxiety about my task. Sometimes I'll try to start planning in my head but it's so hard to start. I end up panic implementing it before the deadline.

Sometimes it happens with other things in my life too. Like cleaning or making appointments, stuff like that.

I hate that I do this.

I believe it's called executive dysfunction.

Commenter_23
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 5
This is literally why I finally hunted down a specialist and got screened. This exact reason. And I am also the project manager. Things got... bad.

Commenter_24
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 3
I do this far too often! The shame doesn't help, it just makes me feel like shit.

Commenter_25
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 3
Seems like a nice post. I will read it later.

Commenter_26
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2
me me me

Commenter_27
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2
Try exposure therapy for OCD

Commenter_28
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2
My friend, I'm going through the same thing.

I have been procrastinating for one and half month now. Today is deadline. Wish me good luck.

​

I really cant focus. I pay real good attention **what tone my team mates** are using and I try to find out what kind of person they are. Also i keep track of **who repeats whose words.** I usually be in my world all the time. Everything i try it works only for two weeks. I'm practicing islam now. I'm half hindu and half christian. I had practiced buddhism as well. I microdosed on weed, overdosed and sleep. I get insane ideas every minute. I cant maintain friendship.

​

I dont have no friends around. I made friends with Jesus because he is of my age 32 and I'm 31. I make jokes and he doesn't laugh.

​

What more - I exercise, meditate, cold water bath, sleep good, get anxiety about meeting. weekends I get lost in my world and its harder for me to switch back to work on monday. So I usually start my work on tuesday. Wednesday I make some progress. Thursday is the day I'm born. So I treat it special. Friday is end of week. Weekends - puff. Only two days I'm working tuesday and wednesdy. and some meeting will mess me up.

​

I realised if we were lazy during our childhood, it has a bad effect when we become adults.

​

I break things apart to find how it works and put it back together with what I need. I couldn't do it at work. I have no memory of who I am. Last meeting my manager reminded me that im a senior developer and juniors are looking up to me and I should set an example.

​

why I'm writing these, I felt like a kid getting insulted at school and there is one more next to me. I just smile, **hello macha**.

Commenter_29
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2
Holy shit yes

Unknown_User
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2
I'm so glad I found this and know I am not alone. I have been working a task which should really have been broken into smaller bits since it is quite a large project. But yes, I have way more hours logged to it than there should be and I feel judged every day. Working remotely is great but the distractions are the death of me.

Example from today: Opened a cabinet door in the bathroom. Oh, the door is really loose. It's just a screw that needs to be tightened. I'll do it quick. Where's the screwdriver???

Next thing I know, the days over and time for bed and I'm feeling defeated knowing I got barely anything accomplished. And knowing the people at stand up are probably wondering what is taking me so long. So I become anxious and full of anxiety...stay up until 2am trying to finish it then say screw it and go to bed. Rinse and repeat.

Been saying I am going to try harder next week but it usually fades after Monday or Tuesday. I'm trying some of these tips though and hopefully next week will actually be different.

Commenter_14
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1
YES.

Unknown_User
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1
Man I just move my oldest tickets to will not do and then pretend they never gave me scope or it want poissble then

Commenter_30
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1
Has procrastination been a problem before this?

ADHD isn't just procrastination but also having a hard time focusing and getting distracted by more stimulating things too easily.

I also have trouble communicating but I feel like that only worsens the procrastination. You'll just become complacent and in the dark. Please talk to them. Not about procrastination but do ask for help, etc. I owe

80% of my progress to my teammates who helped me.

Risking looking stupid is a lot better than than your teammates finding out way later and asking you why you didn't say anything

Commenter_31
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1
This is literally what led me to my diagnosis not long ago

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Commenter_31
ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1
This is literally what led me to my diagnosis not long ago