

Wellness

Try The "Fake Deadline" Hack To Actually Complete Your To-Do List

This brain trick works like a charm.

by Carolyn Steber

Aug. 7, 2025

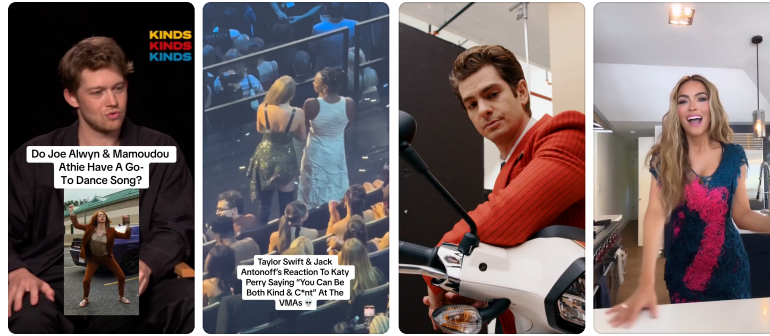


If you're someone who needs the sweat-inducing pressure of a looming deadline to have the tiniest hope of getting anything done, no shame. There's a hack going viral on TikTok that was made specifically for you.

It's called the "fake deadline" trick, and it's perfect for procrastinators or anyone who needs a dose of motivation to check things off their to-do list. On July 24, creator @theunstuffedlife put it like this: "I need a fake deadline to make *real* things happen," and she isn't the only one.

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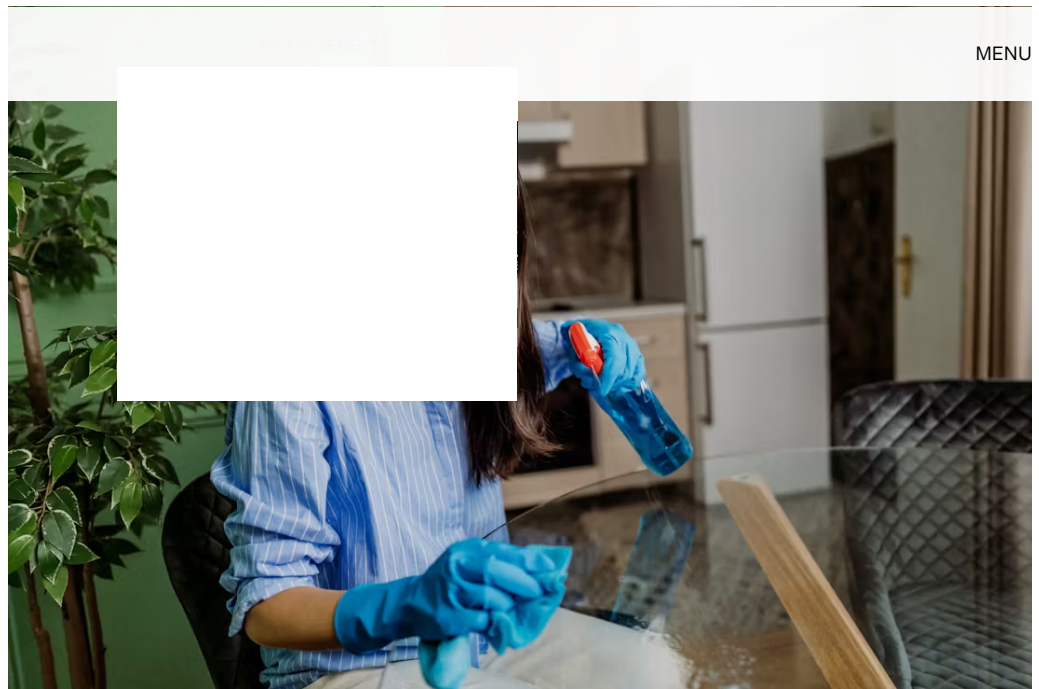
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In her comments, someone said, “If I need to clean my house or get motivated to get things done, I imagine we have someone coming over at a certain time. Gets me RUNNING around accomplishing everything on my list!” It works like a charm if you desperately need to do laundry, take out the trash, or pack for a trip.

The hack is also a godsend for work projects that have a distant deadline that you *know* you’re going to ignore until the last dire moment. Creator @indecisive_tay said “fake deadlines” create a sense of urgency your brain believes so you stop procrastinating and actually get to your to-do list — well before the bell rings.

Here’s the psychology behind this hack and how to make it work for you.

What Is The “Fake Deadline” Hack?



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The "fake deadline" hack is a productivity trick where you give yourself a made-up deadline for a task you've been meaning to complete. It could be something that has an actual deadline at a later date, like a work project that's due in three weeks, or something that will never have a true deadline, like a chore that keeps getting pushed back on your to-do list.

According to Stella Kimbrough, LCSW, a psychotherapist and owner of Calm Pathway, this trick can help you find motivation, break bad habits, and avoid procrastination, which is essentially the "avoidance of a challenging, stressful, or otherwise unpleasant task," she tells Bustle.

Procrastination feels good in the moment because you get to put off feeling anxious or bored, like when you're working on a big project, but it can also quickly become something you learn to rely on when it comes to finishing those same tasks. When you wait until right before a real deadline to begin a task, your body pumps full of adrenaline, and that's what narrows your focus and makes it feel like you're locked in.

"In a sense, procrastination can actually be effective depending on what you are procrastinating," Kimbrough says. "The problem is when you procrastinate so much that you don't leave yourself enough time to adequately complete the task." Either you wait too long to do the project then end up panicking and turning in shoddy work — or missing the real deadline completely — or you put off a task until it ends up creating *other* problems.

The fake deadline trick is supposed to induce a similar sense of urgency, all without running the risk of finishing something late.

How To Make This Hack Work For You



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Instead of relying on a burst of panicky adrenaline before a very-real deadline, the “fake deadline” hack encourages you to find a new source of motivation.

Here’s what it might look like: If you have a project due on Friday, you would put a “fake deadline” in your calendar for Wednesday. You’d then treat Wednesday like the true due date, and your life will be so much more stress-free as a result.

For chores you tend to put off, you could get creative and make up a story about why you need to do them right now. Pretend a friend is coming over and imagine how embarrassed you’d be if they saw your massive pile of laundry. To avoid such (fake) horror, set a timer and start putting it away.

To get used to made-up deadlines, Kimbrough recommends completing smaller tasks, like taking out the trash or doing laundry in a timely fashion. “Building up your confidence with smaller chores can help in the long run with those more intense, unpleasant tasks,” she says.

But I Know The Deadline Isn’t Real...



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On TikTok, creator @chelseasarae said fake deadlines don't work for her because she knows deep down that they aren't real. It's why this trick might not work for everyone, especially if you're a lifelong procrastinator with deeply-rooted bad habits.

If you find it tough to create a false sense of urgency, try breaking the deadline down into smaller chunks. "For example, instead of setting a fake deadline for the entire paper, set a fake deadline for the first paragraph — or first sentence even," Kimbrough says. "Make sure to really be intentional and map it all out ahead of time. Be really clear with yourself. I even suggest visualizing yourself doing the task."

Another trick? Tell someone else about your fake deadline, like a friend or coworker, but don't give away that it's made up. That way, you'll feel accountable in a more tangible way. Body doubling, or working alongside them, can also help you get over the hump of starting a project.

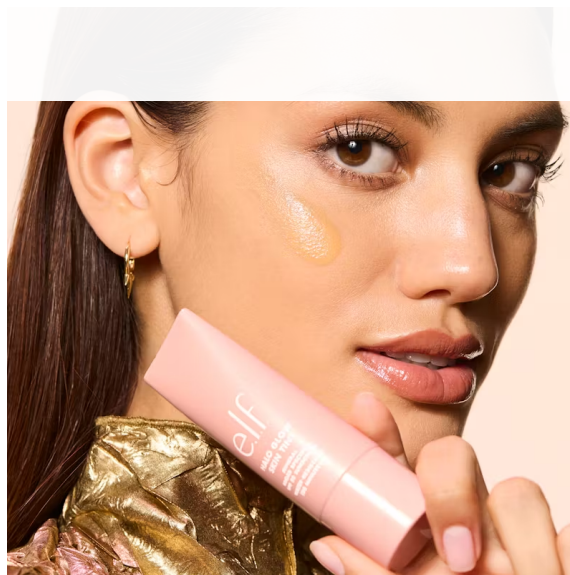
Source:

Stella Kimbrough, LCSW, psychotherapist with Calm Pathway

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ICYMI: We'll Be Wearing This Triple Threat Skin Tint All Summer

Written by **Alix Tunell**
Aug. 1, 2025



If you can step outside without your sunglasses fogging up and your hair taking on a completely different style, you're living a rare kind of summer. For the rest of us sweating through 90+ degree mornings, we have no choice but to pare our routines down to only the highest performers. Luckily, e.l.f. Cosmetics' Halo Glow Skin Tint SPF 50 certainly fits the bill. With the hydrating, brightening benefits of a serum, the protection of a sunscreen, and the glowy coverage of a tint, it's a true triple threat.

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Halo Glow Skin Tint SPF 50

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1. Like a Serum, But Better

The first thing you notice about Halo Glow Skin Tint is just how lightweight it is. The beauty of it is that it does wear more like a serum than makeup, thanks to its fast-absorbing, ultralight formula infused with niacinamide to help even tone and brighten discoloration, bisabolol to soothe, and allantoin to draw in and retain moisture.

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2. Dewy, Not Done Up

But while it may feel barely there, your skin's finish will show otherwise. One layer gives just enough coverage to tone down redness and even things out while still looking like you aren't wearing anything at all, and you can easily build it up without it pilling or veering into cakey territory. It somehow always lands on the right side of natural, dewy radiance — not shimmery, greasy, or overly made-up.

3. SPF That Doesn't Give It Away

Which brings us to arguably the best part of Halo Glow Skin Tint: On top of everything else, it has mineral SPF 50 built in. Mineral sunscreen has a lot going for it — it starts working the moment you apply it, and tends to be gentler on sensitive or breakout-prone skin. It also offers broad-spectrum protection by creating a physical barrier between your skin and the sun. The tradeoff for all those positives has traditionally been texture. Mineral sunscreens are often thicker and heavier than chemical formulas, and notorious for leaving a chalky white cast behind. But not this one. You'd never guess it has SPF, and yet your skin is fully protected — it's even earned The Skin Cancer Foundation's recommendation for safe and effective sun protection.

The shelves are oversaturated with multitaskers claiming to do it all and then delivering the bare minimum, so it's refreshing to find a product that gets it right on all fronts: texture, finish, benefits, protection, price point, and shade range. Halo Glow Skin Tint simplifies your routine without showing its hand, leaving you with skin that's hydrated, luminous, and looks like you invested way more time into it than you did. The 3-in-1 shampoo-body wash-conditioner a few aisles over is shaking in its boots right now.