



# 5 Proven Steps to Get Moving When You Feel Stuck

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## Introduction

We all get stuck. Whether it's writing an email, starting a project, making a difficult decision, or simply getting out of bed—it happens. Most people blame “procrastination,” but that word doesn't solve anything. The real question is: **what's keeping you stuck—and how do you move forward?**

These five proven steps come from decades of performance coaching with students, executives, artists, and athletes. They're simple. They're actionable. And they work.

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## Step 1: Get Calm

### **Stuck = Stressed.**

When your nervous system is overloaded—by pressure, fear, or self-judgment—your body contracts and your mind spins. You can't move forward from that state.

#### **What to do:**

- Stop. Breathe. Inhale for 4, exhale for 6. Do this for 1–2 minutes.
- Sit still. Let your body settle.
- Drop into the present moment.

Calm is the foundation of all productive action. Without it, everything feels harder than it is.

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## Step 2: Name the Task Clearly

Vagueness fuels avoidance. “Get stuff done” or “work on project” means nothing to your brain. The more specific the task, the easier it is to engage.

#### **What to do:**

- Write down one clear, concrete action:  
Example: “Open Word doc and write the first sentence of my report.”
- Break bigger tasks into smaller micro-actions.
- Set a goal that can be completed in 15 minutes or less.

Clarity reduces overwhelm. Specificity turns mountains into stepping stones.

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## Step 3: Make It Time-Bound

Unstructured time is the enemy of progress. If a task has no start or end, your brain avoids it. The solution? Shrink the window.

#### **What to do:**

- Set a timer for 10–20 minutes.
- Commit to working for that time only.
- When the timer ends, stop—or decide to continue if momentum has kicked in.

This technique, often called the “Pomodoro method,” creates just enough urgency to override resistance.

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## Step 4: Identify (and Normalize) the Discomfort

Most of the time, stuckness is a way of avoiding an uncomfortable feeling: fear, boredom, perfectionism, self-doubt. Naming it takes away its power.

### What to do:

- Ask yourself: “What am I feeling right now?”
- Write it down without judgment: “I’m afraid I’ll fail.” “This is boring.” “I don’t know where to start.”
- Remind yourself: *Feelings are not facts.*

Discomfort is not a stop sign. It’s just part of the terrain.

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## Step 5: Take Imperfect Action

Waiting to feel “ready” or “motivated” keeps you stuck. Action creates readiness—not the other way around.

### What to do:

- Start *messy*. Let it be imperfect.
- Reward small wins. Acknowledge the effort, not just the outcome.

- Keep the bar low: progress, not perfection.

Action breeds momentum. One step forward is worth more than a hundred intentions.

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## **Conclusion: You're Not Lazy—You're Stuck. And You Can Unstick Yourself.**

Getting unstuck isn't about doing more—it's about doing the *right things* in the *right order*.  
Calm your nervous system. Clarify the task. Set a timer. Name the feeling. Take one messy step.

It's not magic. It's method. And it works.

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**Want more tools to reduce stress and increase performance under pressure?**

Explore Dr. Ben Bernstein's book:

■ [\*Crush Your Test Anxiety\*](#)

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