

Procrastination creeps in.

It happens. Especially if we've had a gap in our consecutive days of Practice. We have to keep in mind that when we stop or slow our progress for any reason, atrophy sets in. It's just like your physical fitness.

If you are on a weightlifting program and working consistently and intelligently, getting stronger and tracking your progress, you will be gaining muscle and other adaptations. But the moment you take a break, the progress begins to go backwards. Your body is designed to conserve energy so if you don't use your muscles to their safe potential, then your body will adapt by reducing the amount of muscle needed. Why expend energy to support tissue that isn't being used?

This can be applied to so many areas. Cardio capacity, patience, memory, agility, bone density, gratitude, awareness, presence, and practice. And just like a weightlifting program, if you take time off, you can't expect to jump back in where you left off without an injury. You might not have to start all the way back at the beginning, but you do need to scale your effort down to a safe level to get back on track.

It's no different with any other practice. If your Keystone Practice has been built up over time but you've had a break from it, you'll injure yourself if you try to pick up where you left off. It doesn't matter what your practice is. If it's physical, then it's obvious you really could injure yourself. Even playing an instrument can wreak havoc on your body if you had once built up stamina that you no longer possess. But there are other dangers you might not consider....

Self defeating thoughts. Mental fatigue. Discouragement. Resentment toward your distraction- perhaps a loved one, or even yourself. This is by no means a comprehensive list, but you get the idea. So what's the best strategy for getting back on track?

Listen to your procrastination.

We are constantly told that procrastination is a terrible trait with no redeemable qualities. But after making a career of procrastinating, I've learned to look at it as yet another tool. Procrastination is feedback. We can learn from it if we stop resisting and listen.

Procrastination may be telling you that your Vision is off. Try reviewing previous passages and asking yourself if it's authentically your vision or some external pressure? Or, perhaps you've changed your mind. That's cool too! Be thankful to your procrastination for helping you recognize it!

Procrastination may be warning you that you're trying to take on too much too quickly. Perhaps you've atrophied in your Keystone Practice and you need to have a ramp-up period of easier Practice sessions to get back to where you left off.

To get back on track, set the bar low. Just like I said in the beginning of this Course Journal; set the bar so low it feels silly to not get it done. Maybe today's guitar practice is tuning the guitar and tomorrow begins a 2-minute timed practice session to start rebuilding those finger calluses. Whatever your practice is, try restarting it at a ridiculously low standard and each day or week, add just a tiny bit more. Don't ramp up too quickly! In my almost 20 years as a fitness coach I can tell you, the most likely athletes to ever get injured were my higher performers who had taken time off and refused to be patient coming back.

Be kind to yourself.

Be patient with yourself.

Be grateful to yourself *and* your procrastination.

It might just be trying to tell you something.



