

How NOT to strive for...

PERFECTIONISM

Perfectionism is the pursuit of perfection. This can be socially-oriented, performance-oriented or focused on maintaining control. Therefore, perfectionism can be present in **different areas** of your life, e.g.: at school, at home, while pursuing hobbies, and so on.

Perfectionism can have **advantages**, but when perfectionism is too strong, **disadvantages** can outweigh advantages.



How to deal with perfectionism?

STEP 1

Becoming aware of advantages and disadvantages:



STEP 2

Take a closer look at your own thoughts and behavior:

- Reflect on **your internal voice** that criticises and urges you to always perform better. Do you really need to do this?
- Distinguish between things you **can** and **cannot** change. For more info, see [infographic overthinking](#).
- **Goals:** Realistic goals are behavior-oriented (see infographic [SMART goals](#)):
 - **Behavioral-oriented:** 20 minutes of studying and a 5-minute break.
 - **Results-oriented:** I have to pass my exam.
- Don't attribute failures only to causes **within yourself**:
 - **Internal:** I should have started on time so I could have made the deadline
 - **External:** There have been delays with collecting data in the preparatory work that were out of my control, causing me to miss the deadline.
- Learn to set **boundaries**
- Task: do something **not** perfect for once.

STEP 3

Develop gentleness and empathy for yourself: Be compassionate towards yourself. This involves three main things:

- Allow the **feeling** you experience when you do not achieve your perfect goal or when you experience the feeling of failure. Let this feeling sink in for a moment.
- Know that it is **human** not to do everything perfectly and that you are not alone in this.
- Say a **kind word to yourself** as you would to a friend when they come to you with the same situation for comfort or help.

It can be helpful to keep track of these three steps in a notebook, especially in the beginning. It can also be helpful to look back on your process later on.