PRACTICAL RESOURCE

The Five-Minute Start

A low-friction way to begin tasks when procrastination, overwhelm or perfectionism gets in the way.

For tasks that feel bigger before you begin
This is not a productivity competition. The aim is to lower the threshold for starting a task when overwhelm, boredom, perfectionism or uncertainty makes beginning disproportionately difficult.

The task I am avoiding

What makes starting difficult?

- It feels too big
- I do not know where to begin
- I am worried I will do it badly
- It is boring / low-reward
- There are too many competing tasks
- I am waiting to feel motivated
- Something else: _____

Shrink the task

What is the smallest visible action that counts as starting? Not 'work on report'. More like 'open the document and write three rough headings'.

My five-minute start

Make starting easier

Remove one obstacle

What can you put in place beforehand - document open, materials ready, phone away, clear surface, shoes by the door?

Add one cue

What will tell you it is time to begin - calendar alarm, coffee finished, after lunch, when laptop opens?

After five minutes, choose

- **Continue** because momentum has arrived.
- **Stop deliberately** because the agreement was genuinely only five minutes.
- **Schedule another five minutes** and count the start as a success.

What happened when I started?

The rule
Starting is the target. Anything beyond that is a bonus. If you repeatedly turn five minutes into an obligation to finish the whole task, your brain will quickly stop trusting the deal.