

Steps to Solving a Problem



Define the problem

- Make the problem specific. You won't be able to find solutions to a poorly defined problem.
- Remember your Who, What, When, Where and How questions (see the Problems List worksheet).
- Write the problem down. It is helpful to have it on paper.
- List enough details of the problem to think of specific solutions.

Brainstorm possible solutions

- Write down any ideas you have for solving the problem. Don't judge any of the solutions yet — just write them all down. Remember to be creative (and even silly), and consider doing nothing as a possible solution.

Weigh the pros and cons, and choose a solution

Look at your solutions and ask yourself:

- Are the solutions realistic?
- Which solution best solves the problem?
- What are the positive and negative aspects of the solution?

You may find it helpful to write down the pros and cons (pluses and minuses) for several of your possible solutions. Try the Assessing Your Solutions worksheet.

- Choose a solution.

Act on it and evaluate

- Plan how you will try your solution. Try to think of things that might get in your way and plan how to handle them.
- What do you need to do to try your solution?
- Do you need anyone else's support?
- How long do you think you realistically need to try the solution until it starts to work?
- How do you know if the solution is working?
- Ask yourself if the attempted solution solved the problem.

If the solution didn't work, is there anything you could do differently that might make it work next time? Do you need to return to Step 3 and choose another solution?

