

# Time Management: Top 10 Tips

1. Know how you spend your time (time log)
2. Set priorities (urgency/importance matrix)
3. Use a planning tool (wall charts, todo list, etc.)
4. Eliminate clutter & handle incoming info.
5. Schedule time
6. Delegate
7. Stop procrastinating
8. Manage time wasters (people and activities, e.g., email)
9. Avoid multi-tasking
10. Stay healthy

# **Time Management**

**Andy Cockburn**

**Adapted from Randy Pausch**

**Carnegie Mellon University**

**<http://www.randypausch.com>**

# Introduction

- **Time needs management, just like money**
- **Much of this applies to your later career**
- **Bad time management = stress**

# **The Problem is Severe**

**By some estimates, people waste about 2 hours per day. Signs of time wasting:**

- Messy desk and cluttered (or no) files**
- Can't find things**
- Miss appointments, need to reschedule them late and/or unprepared for meetings**
- Volunteer to do things other people should do**
- Tired/unable to concentrate**
- People nagging you**

# Goals, Priorities, and Planning

- **What should I do next?**
- **Why am I doing this?**
- **What is the goal?**
- **Why will I succeed?**
- **What happens if I chose not to do it?**

# Planning

- **Failing to plan is planning to fail**
- **Plan Each Day, Each Week, Each Semester**
- **You can always change your plan, but only once you have one!**
- **Use a calendar and reminders**

# Understanding & Prioritising the TO DO List



	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	1	2
Not Important	3	4

# Paperwork & files

- **Clutter leads to thrashing**
- **Keep desk clear: focus on one thing at a time**
- **A good file system is essential**
- **Touch each piece of paper once**

# Email

- **Touch each piece of email once; your inbox is not your TODO list**
- **Turn off distractions/notifications (unless good reason to do otherwise)**
  - **inbox notifications**
  - **Twitter alerts, FB updates, etc.**
- **Have a policy for incoming email**



# Telephone

- **Keep calls short; stand during call**
- **Start by announcing goals for the call**
- **Don't put your feet up**
- **Have something in view that you're waiting to get to next**

# Telephone

- **When done, get off: “I have students waiting”**
- **If necessary, hang up**
- **Group outgoing calls: just before lunch and 5pm**

# Reading Pile

- **Only read something if you'll be fired for not reading it**
- **Note that this refers to periodicals and routine reading, which is different than a research dig**

# Office Logistics

- **Make your office comfortable for you, and optionally comfortable for others**
- **No soft comfortable chairs!**

# Scheduling Yourself

- You don't find time for important things, you make it
- Everything you do is an opportunity cost
- Learn to say “No”

# **Learn to say “No”**

- **Will this help me get: a job/promoted?**
- **Will this help me get my masters?**
- **Will this help me get my Ph.D?**
- **Keep “help me” broadly defined**

# Everyone has Good and Bad Times

- **Find your creative/thinking time. Defend it ruthlessly, spend it alone, maybe at home.**
- **Find your dead time. Schedule meetings, phone calls, and mundane stuff during it.**

# Interruptions

- **6-9 minutes, 4-5 minute recovery – five interruptions shoots an hour**
- **You must reduce frequency and length of interruptions (turn phone calls into email)**
- **E-mail noise on new mail is an interruption -> TURN IT OFF!!**



# Cutting Things Short

- **“I’ m in the middle of something now...”**
- **Start with “I only have 5 minutes” – you can always extend this**
- **Stand up, stroll to the door, complement, thank, shake hands**
- **Clock-watching; on wall behind them**

# Time Journals

- **It's amazing what you learn!**
- **Monitor yourself in 15 minute increments for between 3 days and two weeks.**
- **Update every ½ hour: not at end of day**

# TIME LOG

TIME	ACTIVITY													BUSINESS FUNCTION	NOTES				
	READING	DICTION	PAPERWORK	PHONE CALLS	CONSULTATIONS	MEETINGS	INSPECTIONS	TRAVEL	PLANNING	OTHER	SALES	PROGRESSING	FINANCE			PERSONNEL	CUSTOMER RELATIONS	ADMIN. ROUTINE	OTHER
7:00- 7:15																			
7:15- 7:30																			
7:30- 7:45																			
7:45- 8:00																			
8:00- 8:15																			
8:15- 8:30	X																		CHATTING
8:30- 8:45		X																	INCOMING MAIL
8:45- 9:00			X																MAIL
9:00- 9:15	X										X								MISC. PHONE CALLS
9:15- 9:30	X																		READING NEWSPAPER
9:30- 9:45																			READING TRADE JOURNAL
9:45-10:00																			COFFEE BREAK
10:00-10:15			X																COFFEE BREAK
10:15-10:30												X							ACME - WARRANTY PROBLEM
10:30-10:45			X								X								SAW RICHARDSON
10:45-11:00			X								X								"
11:00-11:15			X								X								WORK ON SALARY SCHEDULE
11:15-11:30			X								X								"
11:30-11:45			X								X								WEEKLY REPORT
11:45-12:00																			SAW OFFICE MACHINE SALES PERSON
12:00-12:15			X																LUNCH WITH RICHARDSON
12:15-12:30			X																"
12:30-12:45			X																"
12:45- 1:00			X																"
1:00- 1:15																			RETURN TO OFFICE
1:15- 1:30			X																RETURNED MISC. PHONE CALLS
1:30- 1:45			X																"
1:45- 2:00			X																MET WITH BOSS
2:00- 2:15			X																"
2:15- 2:30			X																"
2:30- 2:45																			PERSONAL ERRANDS
2:45- 3:00																			"
3:00- 3:15																			TRAVEL TO SEE JOHNSON
3:15- 3:30			X																JOHNSON MEETING
3:30- 3:45			X																"
3:45- 4:00																			RETURN TO OFFICE
4:00- 4:15		X																	CHAT WITH ROGERS
4:15- 4:30	X																		DICTION ON SALARY SCHEDULE
4:30- 4:45			X																READ PM NEWSPAPER
4:45- 5:00			X																SAW MURPHY RENEW PROCEDURES
																			"

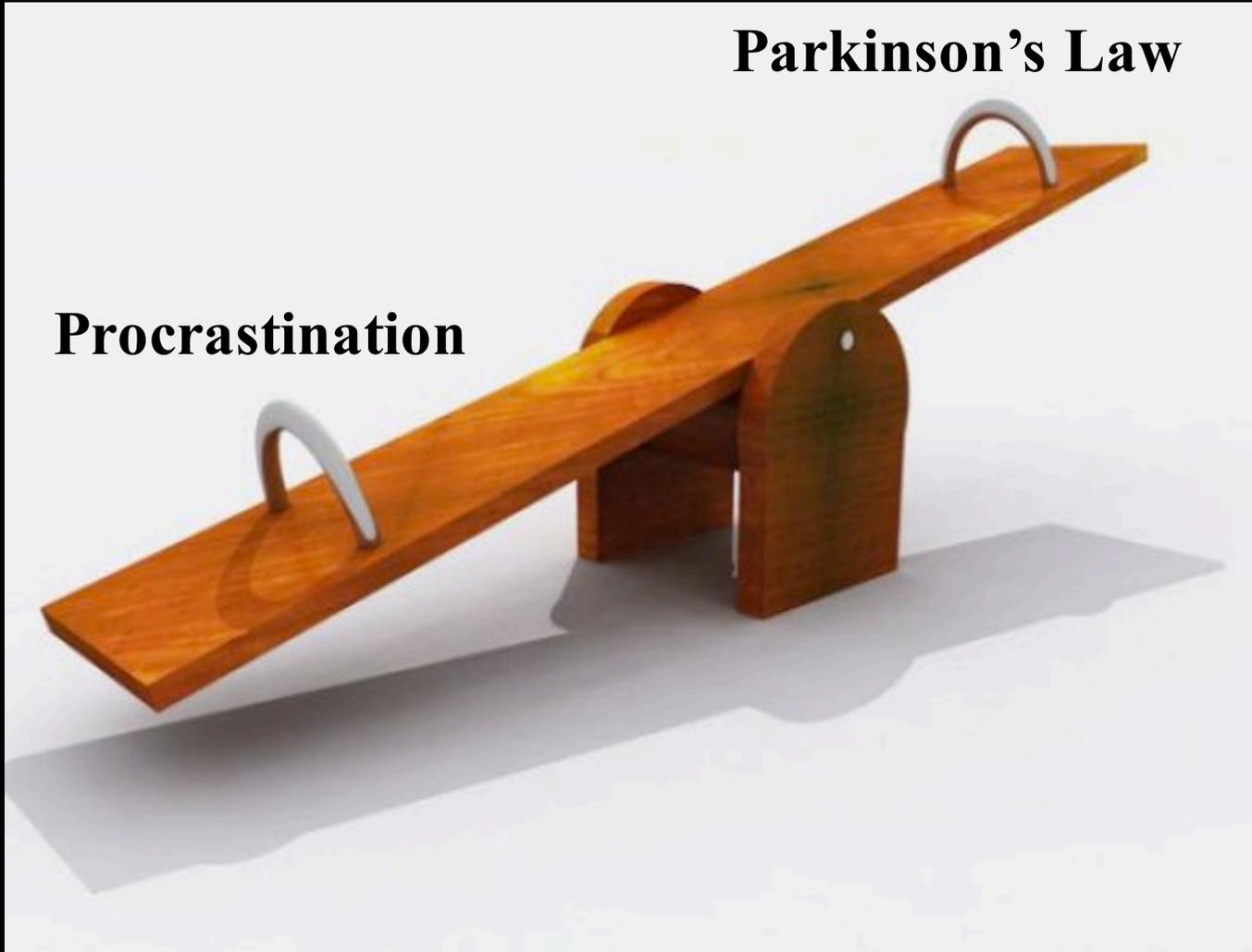
# Using Time Journal Data

- **What am I doing that doesn't really need to be done?**
- **What am I doing that could be done by someone else?**
- **What am I doing that could be done more efficiently?**
- **What do I do that wastes others' time?**

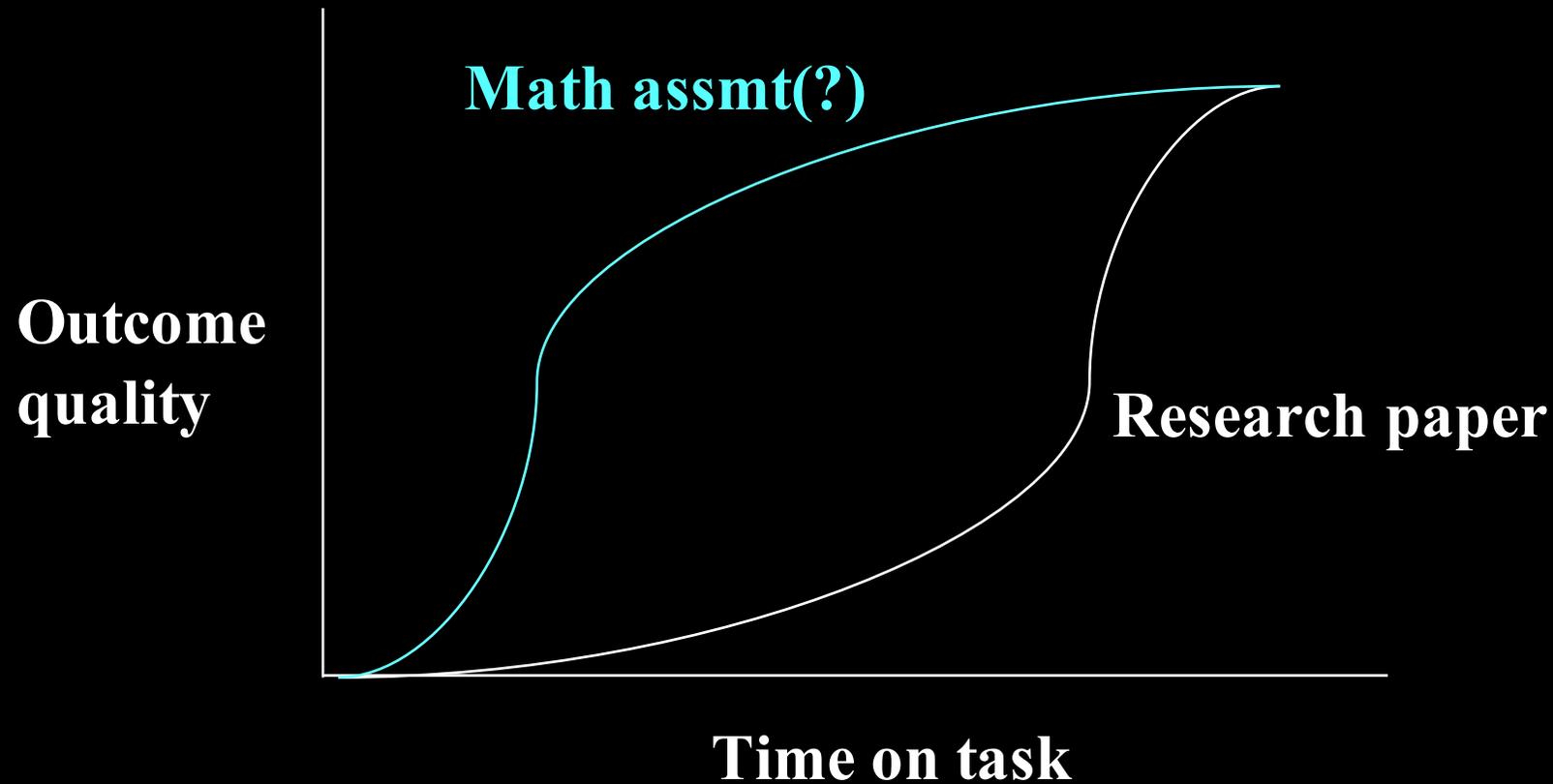
# Balancing Act

**Parkinson's Law**

**Procrastination**



# Balancing Act



- Different functions for different task types

# Comfort Zones

- **Deadlines are really important: establish them yourself!**
- **Identify why you aren't enthusiastic**
  - **Fear of embarrassment**
  - **Fear of failure?**
- **Get a spine!**

# Delegation

- **No one is an island**
- **You can accomplish a lot more with help**

# **Delegation is not dumping**

- **Grant authority with responsibility.**
- **Concrete goal, deadline, and consequences.**
- **Treat your people well**

# Challenge People

- **People rise to the challenge: You should delegate “until they complain”**
- **Communication Must Be Clear: “Get it in writing”**
- **Give objectives, not procedures**
- **Tell the relative importance of this task**



# Meetings

- **Average executive: > 40% of time**
- **Maximum of 1 hour**
- **Prepare: there must be an agenda**
- **Keep track of decisions: who is responsible for what by when?**
- **Beware of ‘Meetings for Information’  
– cancel!**



# Andy's Magic E-Mail Tips



- Save all of it; no exceptions
- If you want somebody to do something, make them the only recipient. Otherwise, you have diffusion of responsibility. Give a concrete request/task and a deadline.
- If you really want somebody to do something, CC someone powerful.
- Nagging is okay; if someone doesn't respond in 48 hours, they'll probably never respond. (True for phone as well as email).

# Managing your supervisor

- Formally scheduled meetings
- What's my goal to have done by then?
- Who to turn to for help?
- Remember: advisors want results !
- They know more than you do
- They care about you
- Take the initiative in talking with them!

# General Advice

- Kill your television/games



- Turn money into time – especially important for people with kids or other family commitments

- Eat and sleep and exercise.

Above all else!

