

# Being efficient during your PhD

IONS | X 003 | Thu 10 Jan 2013

## Being efficient during your PhD



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IONS 13 | Zürich  
Thu 10 Jan 2013

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Expected gain

What we could get

$$E = \sum_i (p_i \times x_i)$$

The probability  
that we get it

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## Being efficient during your PhD



- 1 **What is desirable**  
Managing priorities
- 2 **What is achievable**  
Managing expectations
- 3 **Making it happen**  
Managing spacetime

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## Being efficient during your PhD



### 1 **What is desirable**

Managing priorities

### **What is achievable**

Managing expectations

### **Making it happen**

Managing spacetime

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## Manage priorities

Challenge things

Establish a hierarchy

Make things desirable

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## Manage priorities

Challenge things

Establish a hierarchy

Make things desirable

What would happen  
if you did **not** do it?

Learn to say “no”  
(and to delegate)

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## Manage priorities

Challenge things

**Establish a hierarchy**

Make things desirable



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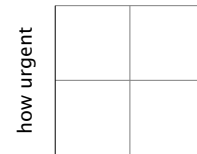
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## Manage priorities

Challenge things

**Establish a hierarchy**

Make things desirable



how urgent

how important



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## Manage priorities

Challenge things

Establish a hierarchy

**Make things desirable**

**Think big**  
(broad, long-term)

**Reward yourself**  
for what you accomplish

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## Being efficient during your PhD



What is desirable

Managing priorities

2

**What is achievable**

Managing expectations

**Making it happen**

Managing spacetime

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## Manage expectations

Beware of perfectionism

Choose your battles wisely

Make things achievable

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## Manage expectations

**Beware of perfectionism**

Choose your battles wisely

Make things achievable

Stop comparing yourself  
to others (or to perfection)

Evaluate performance  
against objectives

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## Manage expectations

Beware of perfectionism

**Choose your battles wisely**

Make things achievable

God, grant me

The serenity to accept  
the things I cannot change,

The courage to change  
the things I can,

And the wisdom  
to know the difference.

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## Manage expectations

Beware of perfectionism

Choose your battles wisely

**Make things achievable**

**Break up complex tasks**  
into simpler steps

**Commit to part of the job**  
in space or in time

**Believe you can do it**  
See yourself succeeding

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## Being efficient during your PhD



What is desirable

Managing priorities

What is achievable

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3 **Making it happen**

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## Manage time

Plan your activities

Use your time well

Make more time



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## Manage time

**Plan your activities**

Use your time well

Make more time

**Structure your actions**

Sort, batch, prioritize

**Make a “battle plan”**

(sequence, durations)

**Lower the entry barrier**

Remember to warm up

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## Manage time

Plan your activities

**Use your time well**

Make more time

**Value your prime time**  
(not all time is equal)

**Avoid (self-)interruptions**  
Allow yourself to focus

**Manage pressure**  
Still, take breaks

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## Manage time

Plan your activities

Use your time well

**Make more time**

**Recoup lost moments**  
(mostly waiting times)

**Pull the plug**  
(TV, Facebook, etc.)

**Get up early**  
Come in early

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## Manage space

Physical space

Virtual space

Conceptual space

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## Manage space

**Physical space**

Virtual space

Conceptual space

Clean/organize your desk  
your office, your papers, etc.

Go somewhere else  
Change perspective

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## Manage space

Physical space

**Virtual space**

Conceptual space

Clean/organize your laptop  
your e-mail, your files, etc.

Use software tools well  
(if and only if they help)

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## Manage space

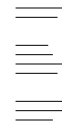
Physical space

Virtual space

**Conceptual space**

**Make structure visible**  
(priorities, actions, etc.)

TO DO



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## Manage space

Physical space

Virtual space

**Conceptual space**

**Make structure visible**  
(priorities, actions, etc.)





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**What is desirable**

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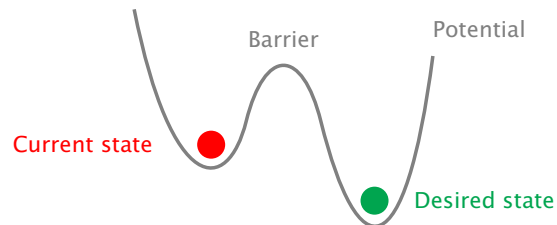
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A PhD is about breaking down  
and picking yourself up

Be ready to make changes

Change requires an investment



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A PhD is about breaking down  
and picking yourself up

**Be ready to make changes**

Change requires an investment

**No guilt, no blame—and no excuses**

Look for solutions, not for culprits or escapes

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**A PhD is about breaking down  
and picking yourself up**

**Be ready to make changes**

Change requires an investment

**No guilt, no blame—and no excuses**

Look for solutions, not for culprits or escapes

**Do what you love, love what you do**

When you're in love, you always find the time

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Wishing you every success  
making your PhD happen