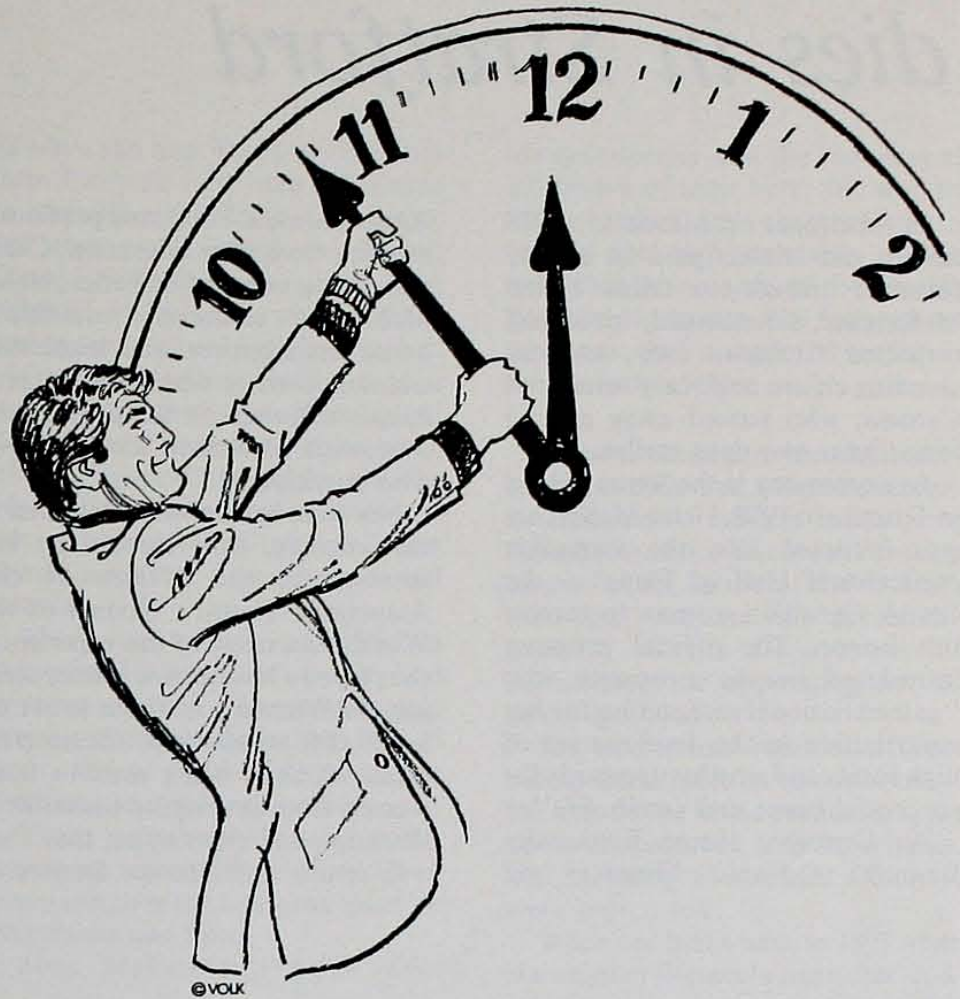


this is fine, but I just can't get around to doing it." In other words you procrastinate. Procrastination is one of the most common problems in managing time and it is a real timewaster. When you are procrastinating, you are probably not even doing anything else. Why do we do such an unproductive thing? It usually can be brought down to one of two things. Perhaps the task is overwhelming and we just don't know where to start or else the task is rather unpleasant.

If a task overwhelms you, the secret is to get started somehow. Get involved in some way or other. If you can't begin doing it, begin planning how to do it. If you can't plan how to do it, gather some facts, figures or materials such that you can begin planning. If you have to write a report, or letter, just start writing. Never mind what garbage you produce, just write. You can always throw parts of it out later, but at least you have started. You will probably find that it wasn't all that difficult. The key is to get yourself involved because one thing leads to another. (Where have we heard that before?)

The other reason we procrastinate is we think a task is too difficult. Try to figure out why this is so. What are you afraid of? For every reason you come up with, provide yourself with an answer or an argument. If the task is too difficult because you are not prepared, then all you have to do is prepare yourself. If you are afraid to face a certain person, ask yourself, what can that person possibly do to hurt you. Let your imagination go! Imagine the very worst possible case. When you come back to reality, it usually is not all that bad.

Ask yourself, what is the price you pay for procrastinating. Is it worth all



the sweat you are putting yourself through? Often, little tasks become big ones the longer we wait. You may end up spending more time because of fatigue from resisting from doing it. Stress the benefits. Imagine how good it will feel to be rid of the task. Think of all the advantages there will be in having it done.

In the end you may need some self-discipline. You must be "up" to doing it and you must begin now, not later. This applies to all time management ideas. You must be in control of yourself. What you have read in these two pages is just about all you need to know to manage your time. The only other ingredient is you. All that is left is to do it. Manage your time and you manage your life.

*This article was written by Graham Hitchins. Until February 1985, Mr. Hitchins was the staff development officer for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food.*