

Little's Law

Business & Management

The relationship between inventory, throughput and time.

Work in progress equals throughput multiplied by flow time.

$$\text{WIP} = \text{throughput} \times \text{flow time}$$

50 items in process, 10 finished per hour **Flow time is 5 hours**
 $50 \div 10.$

Halve WIP at the same throughput

Flow time halves

The core argument for limiting work in progress.

Applies to

Queues, factories, software teams

Any stable process.

THE COMMON MISTAKE

✗ **Adding more work in progress to go faster**

✓ **Limiting WIP to cut flow time**

Throughput is set by the bottleneck. Extra WIP only lengthens the queue in front of it.

It holds for any stable system, whatever the arrival pattern. That generality is why it is used everywhere.