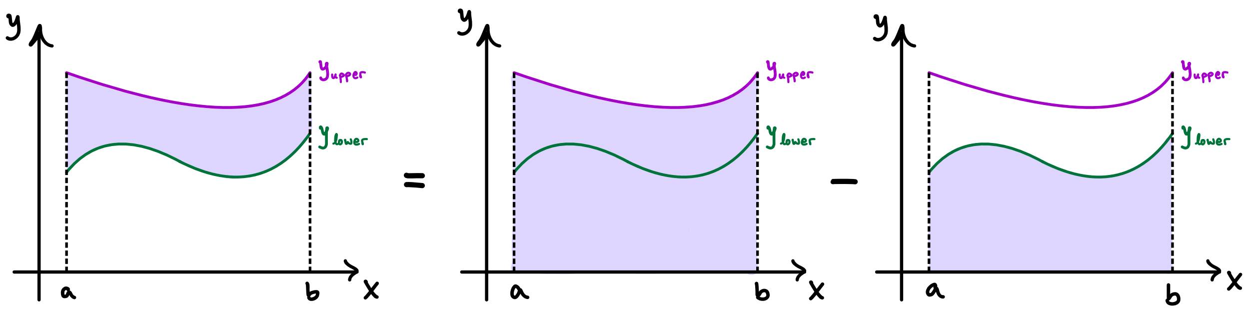
§3.1 – Area Between Curves

Recall: If $f(x) \geq 0$, then the area between the graph of f and the x-axis from $x=a$ to $x=b$ is

$$\text{Area} = \int_a^b f(x)\,dx \qquad (1)$$

More generally, the area between two curves from $x=a$ to $x=b$ can be calculated as

$$\text{Area} = \int_a^b \left(y_{upper} - y_{lower}\right) dx \qquad (2)$$



Note: Formula (1) is really a special case of formula (2) where $y_{upper} = f(x)$ and $y_{lower} = 0$, the x-axis.

Ex: Find the area enclosed between $y = x$ and $y = x^2$

(a) from $x = 2$ to $x = 3$

(b) from $x = 0$ to $x = 3$

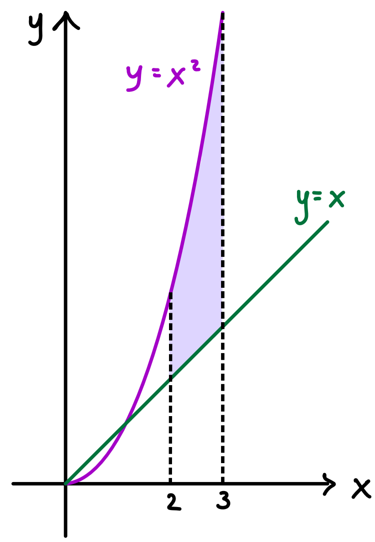
Solution: Start with a picture!

(a) For $x \in [2,3]$, we have $x \leq x^2$, hence

$$\text{Area} = \int_2^3 \left(y_{\text{upper}} - y_{\text{lower}} \right) dx$$

$$= \int_2^3 (x^2 - x)\, dx$$

$$= \left[\frac{x^3}{3} - \frac{x^2}{2} \right]_2^3 = \dots = \boxed{\frac{23}{6}}$$

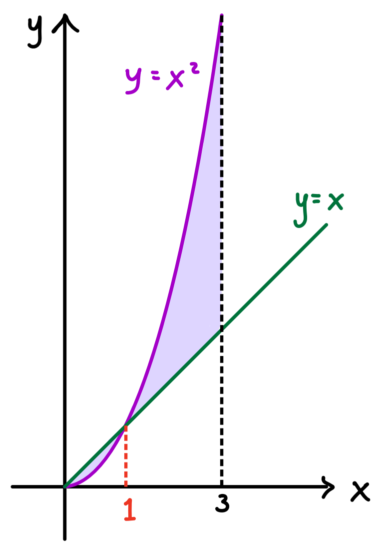


(b) The curves intersect when $x^2 = x$,

so $x = 0$ or $x = 1$.

For $x \in [0,1]$, we have $x^2 \leq x$; while

for $x \in [1,3]$, we have $x \leq x^2$, hence



$$\text{Area} = \int_0^1 (y_{upper} - y_{lower})\,dx + \int_1^3 (y_{upper} - y_{lower})\,dx$$

$$= \int_0^1 (x - x^2)\,dx + \int_1^3 (x^2 - x)\,dx$$

$$= \left[\frac{x^2}{2} - \frac{x^3}{3}\right]_0^1 + \left[\frac{x^3}{3} - \frac{x^2}{2}\right]_1^3 = \cdots = \frac{1}{6} + \frac{14}{3} = \boxed{\frac{29}{6}}$$

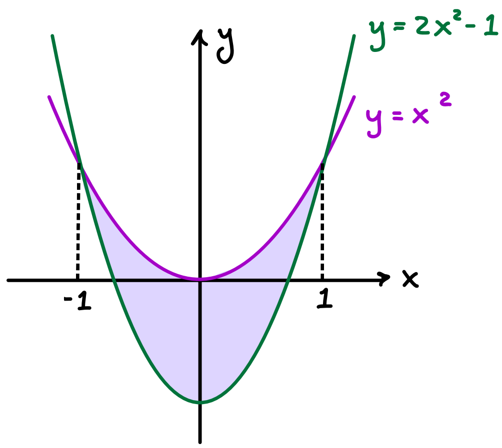
Ex: Calculate the area enclosed between $y = x^2$ and $y = 2x^2 - 1$.

Solution: The curves intersect when $x^2 = 2x^2 - 1$, or equivalently, when $x^2 = 1$, hence $x = \pm 1$. We have $y_{upper} = x^2$ and $y_{lower} = 2x^2 - 1$. Thus,

$$\text{Area} = \int_{-1}^1 \left(x^2 - (2x^2 - 1)\right)\,dx$$

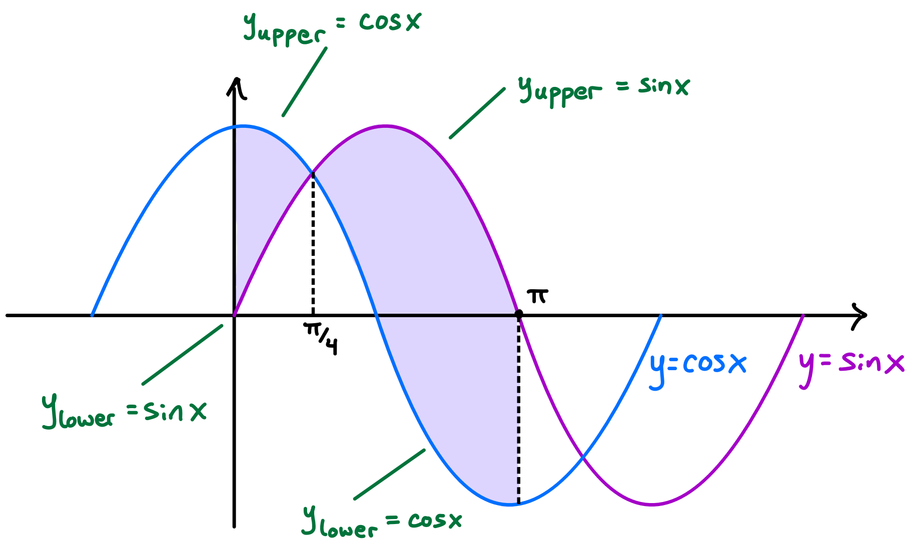
$$= \int_{-1}^1 (1 - x^2)\,dx$$

$$= \left[x - \frac{x^3}{3}\right]_{-1}^1 = \cdots = \boxed{\frac{4}{3}}$$



Ex: Calculate the area enclosed between $y = \cos x$ and $y = \sin x$ from $x = 0$ to $x = \pi$.

Solution: The curves cross when $x = \pi/4$. We'll need to use two separate integrals to calculate the area.



$$\text{Area} = \int_0^{\pi/4} \left(y_{upper} - y_{lower}\right) dx + \int_{\pi/4}^{\pi} \left(y_{upper} - y_{lower}\right) dx$$

$$= \int_0^{\pi/4} \left(\cos x - \sin x\right) dx + \int_{\pi/4}^{\pi} \left(\sin x - \cos x\right) dx$$

$$= \Big[\sin x + \cos x\Big]_0^{\pi/4} + \Big[-\cos x - \sin x\Big]_{\pi/4}^{\pi}$$

$$= \left[\left(\sin\frac{\pi}{4} + \cos\frac{\pi}{4}\right) - \left(\cancel{\sin 0} + \cos 0\right)\right] + \left[\left(-\cos\pi - \cancel{\sin\pi}\right) - \left(-\cos\frac{\pi}{4} - \sin\frac{\pi}{4}\right)\right]$$

$$= \frac{\sqrt{2}}{2} + \frac{\sqrt{2}}{2} - \cancel{1} - (\cancel{-1}) + \frac{\sqrt{2}}{2} + \frac{\sqrt{2}}{2} = \boxed{2\sqrt{2}}$$

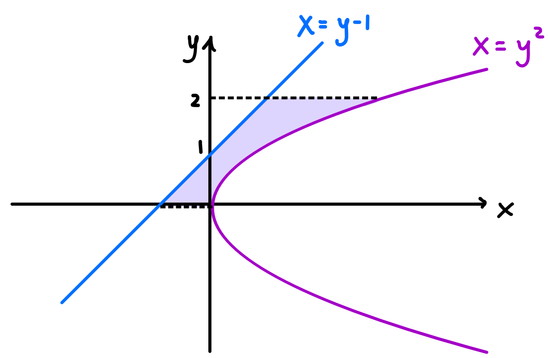
If the region is enclosed between a left curve and a right curve from $y=c$ to $y=d$, then we can get the area in between by integrating with respect to y:

$$\boxed{\text{Area} = \int_{y=c}^{y=d} \left(x_{\text{rightmost}} - x_{\text{leftmost}}\right) dy}$$

Ex: Find the area between $x = y-1$ and $x = y^2$ for $y \in [0,2]$.

Solution:

Here, the region is bounded between $x_{\text{leftmost}} = y-1$ and $x_{\text{rightmost}} = y^2$ from $y=0$ to $y=2$.



$$\therefore \text{Area} = \int_0^2 \left(y^2 - (y-1) \right) dy$$

$$= \left[\frac{y^3}{3} - \frac{y^2}{2} + y \right]_0^2 = \frac{8}{3} - \frac{4}{2} + 2 = \boxed{\frac{8}{3}}$$