

Procedures and the Call Stack

Topics

- Procedures
- Call stack
- Procedure/stack instructions
- Calling conventions
- Register-saving conventions

Why Procedures?

Why functions? Why methods?

```
int contains_char(char* haystack, char needle) {  
    while (*haystack != '\0') {  
        if (*haystack == needle) return 1;  
        haystack++;  
    }  
    return 0;  
}
```

Procedural Abstraction

Implementing Procedures

How does a caller pass **arguments** to a procedure?

How does a caller get a **return value** from a procedure?

Where does a procedure store **local variables**?

How does a procedure know **where to return**
(what code to execute next when done)?

How do procedures **share limited registers** and **memory**?

Call Chain

```
yoo (...)
```

```
{
```

```
.
```

```
.
```

```
who () ;
```

```
.
```

```
.
```

```
}
```

```
who (...)
```

```
{
```

```
• • •
```

```
ru () ;
```

```
• • •
```

```
ru () ;
```

```
• • •
```

```
}
```

```
ru (...)
```

```
{
```

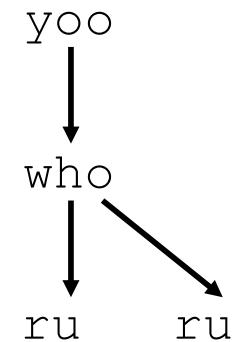
```
.
```

```
.
```

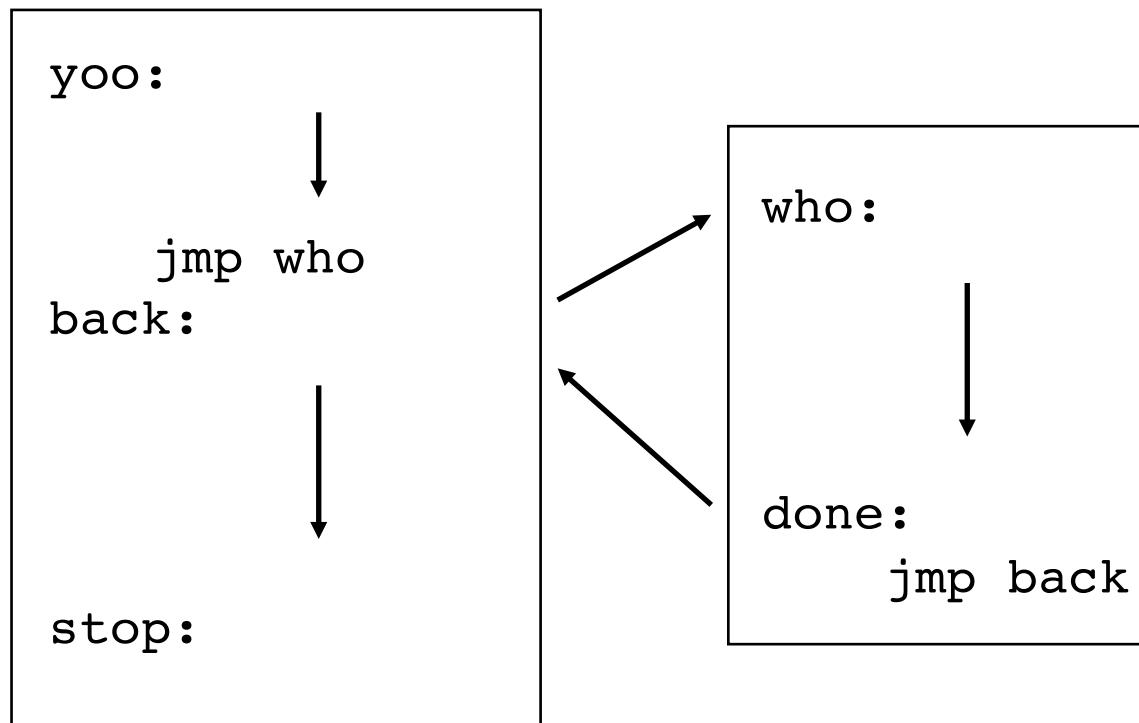
```
.
```

```
}
```

Example
Call Chain



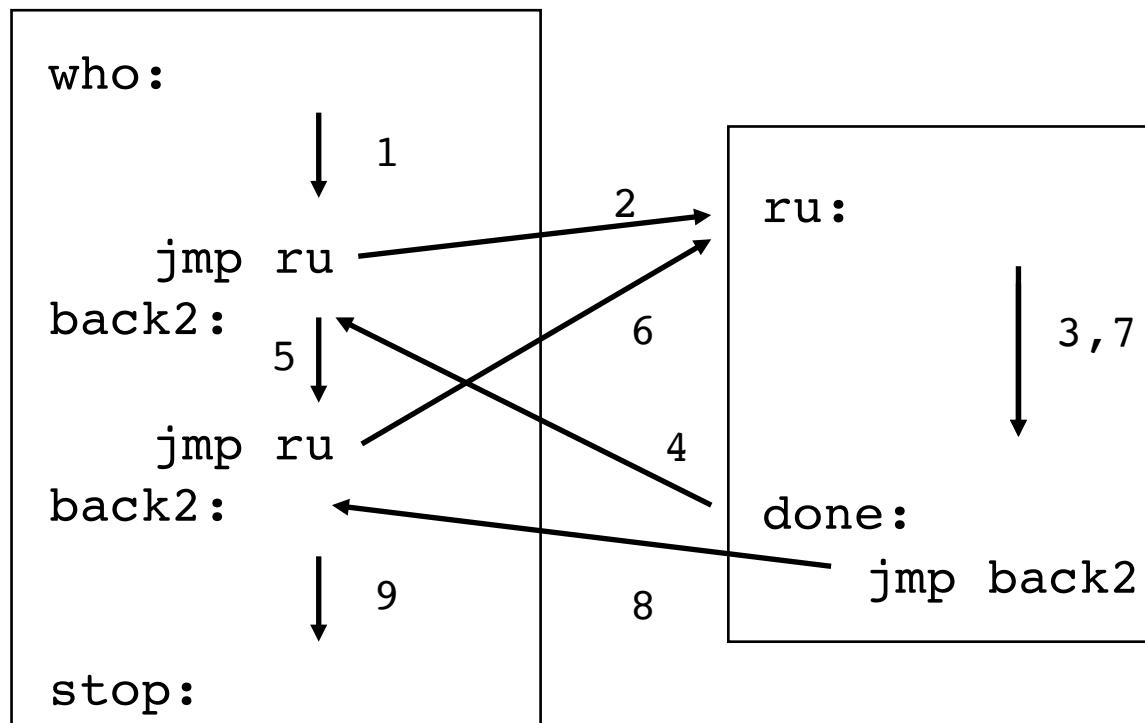
First Try (broken)



What if we want to call a function from multiple places in the code?

First Try (broken)

What if we want to call a function from multiple places in the code?



Implementing Procedures

How does a caller pass **arguments** to a procedure?

How does a caller get a **return value** from a procedure?

Where does a procedure store **local variables**?

How does a procedure know **where to return**
(what code to execute next when done)?

How do procedures **share limited registers** and **memory**?

All these need **separate storage *per call!***
(not just per procedure)

Memory Layout

Addr	Perm	Contents	Managed by	Initialized
$2^N - 1$	RW	Procedure context	Compiler	Run-time
Heap	RW	Dynamic data structures	Programmer, malloc/free, new/GC	Run-time
Statics	RW	Global variables/ static data structures	Compiler/ Assembler/Linker	Startup
Literals	R	String literals	Compiler/ Assembler/Linker	Startup
Text	X	Instructions	Compiler/ Assembler/Linker	Startup
0				

The diagram illustrates the memory layout from address 0 to $2^N - 1$. The stack grows downwards from $2^N - 1$, indicated by an upward arrow. The heap grows upwards from 0, indicated by a downward arrow. Below the heap are four sections: Text (instructions), Literals (string literals), Statics (global variables), and Literals (static data structures). The stack section is labeled 'Procedure context' and is managed by the compiler at run-time.

Call Stack

Memory region managed with stack discipline

`%rsp` holds lowest stack address
(address of "top" element)



Stack “Bottom”



Stack “Top”

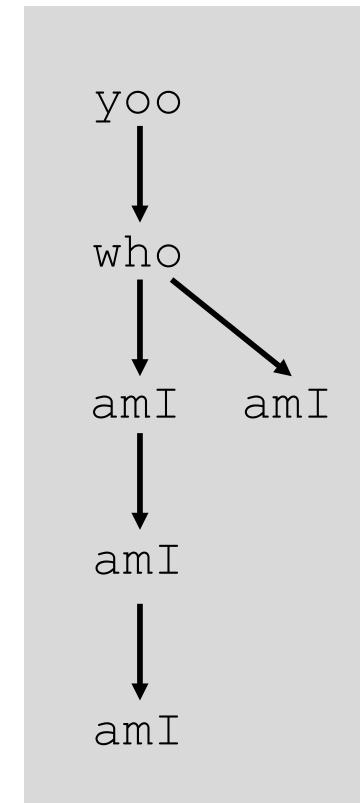
Call Chain Example

```
yoo (...)  
{  
    •  
    •  
    who () ;  
    •  
    •  
}
```

```
who (...)  
{  
    •  
    amI () ;  
    •  
    amI () ;  
    •  
}
```

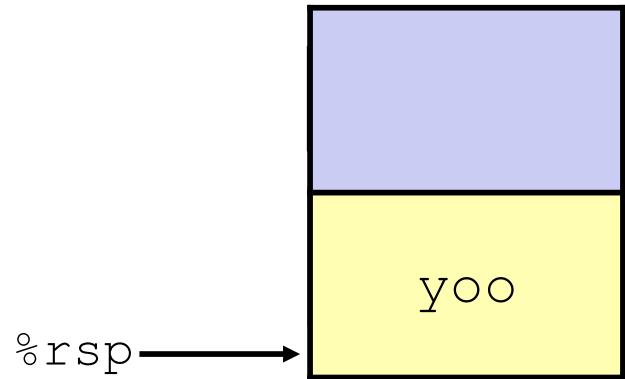
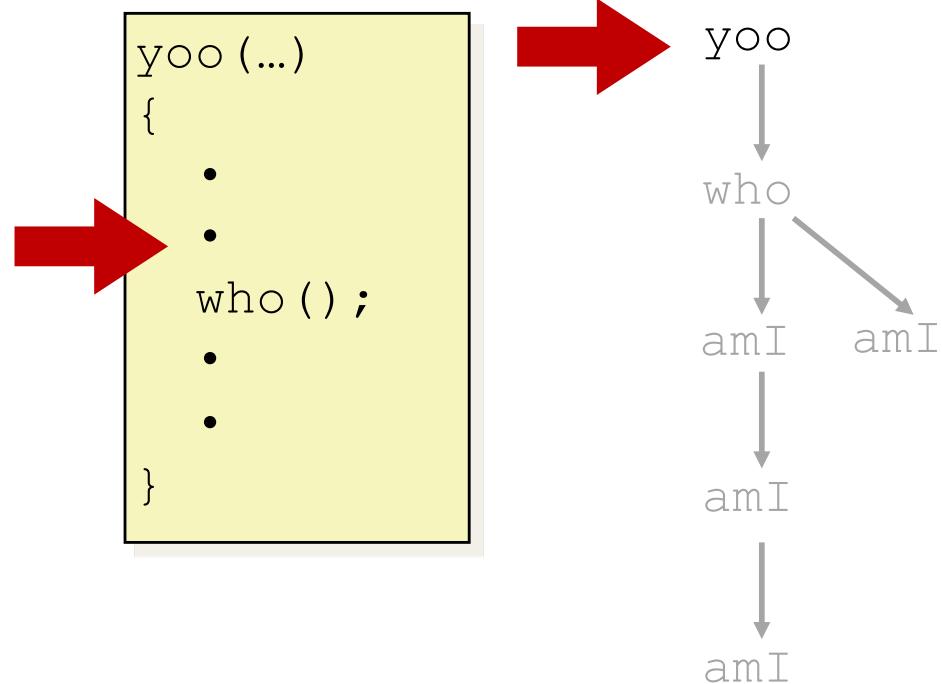
```
amI (...)  
{  
    •  
    if (...) {  
        amI ()  
    }  
    •  
}
```

Example
Call Chain

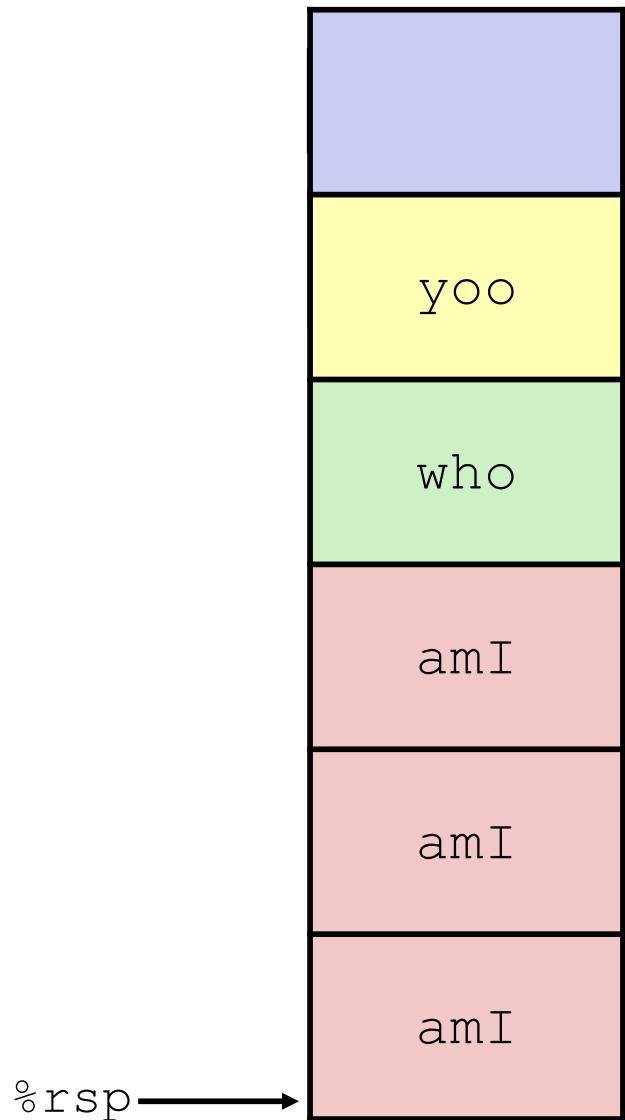
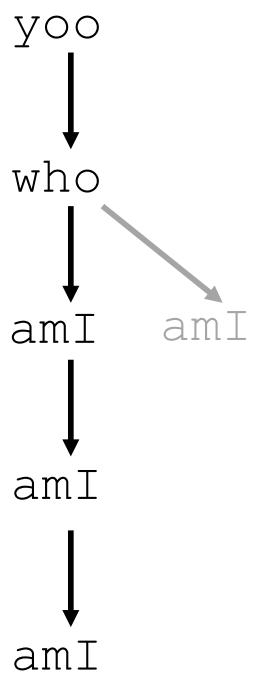
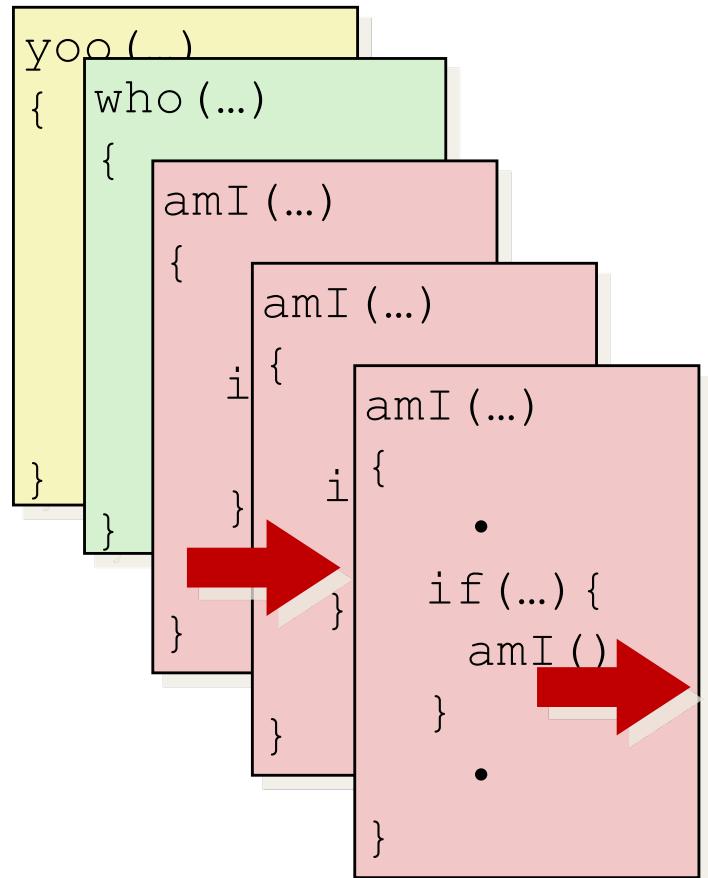


Procedure `amI` is recursive
(calls itself)

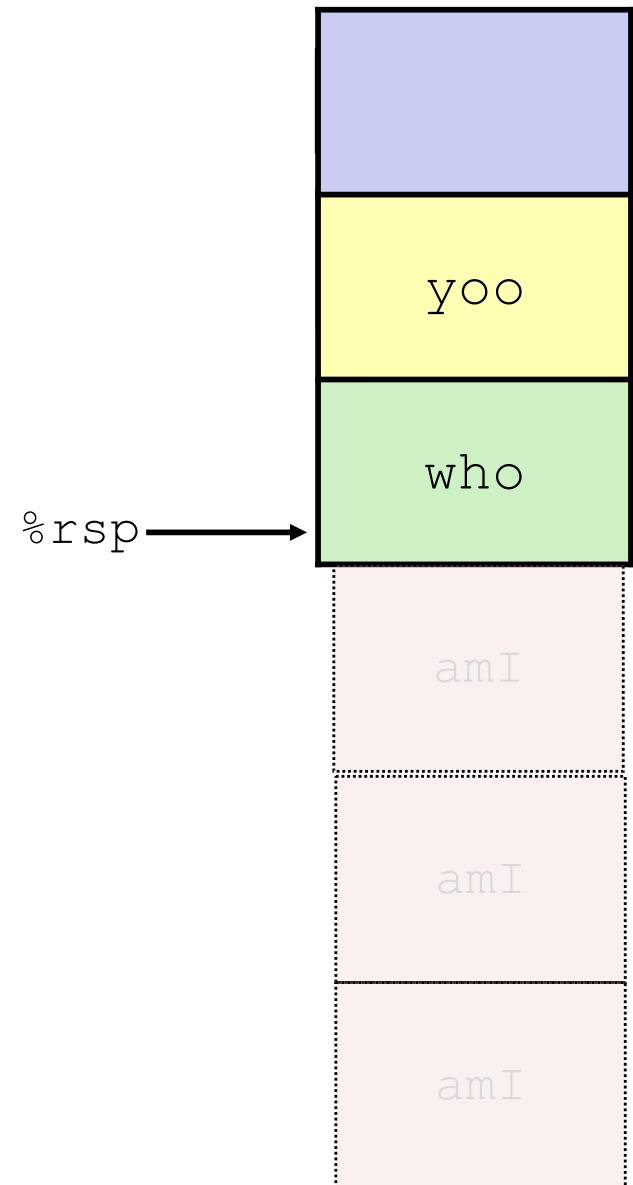
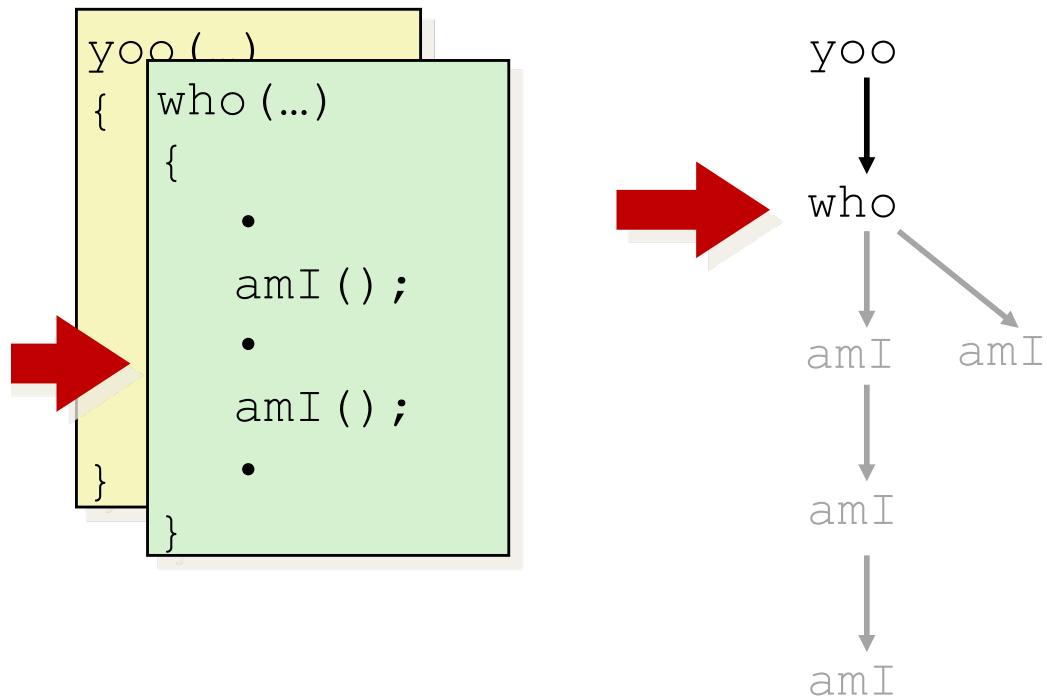
Stack



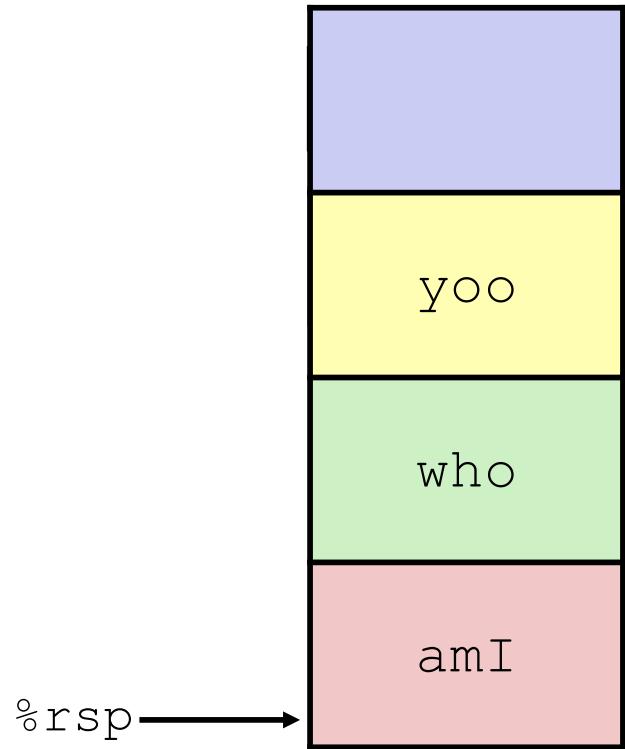
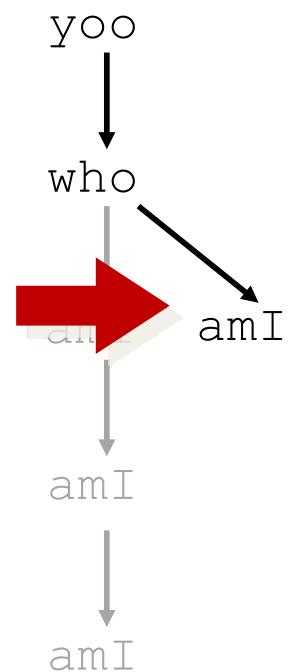
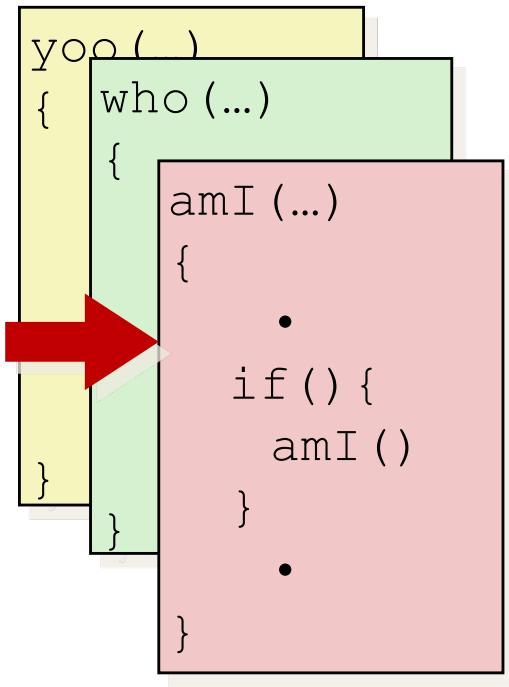
Stack



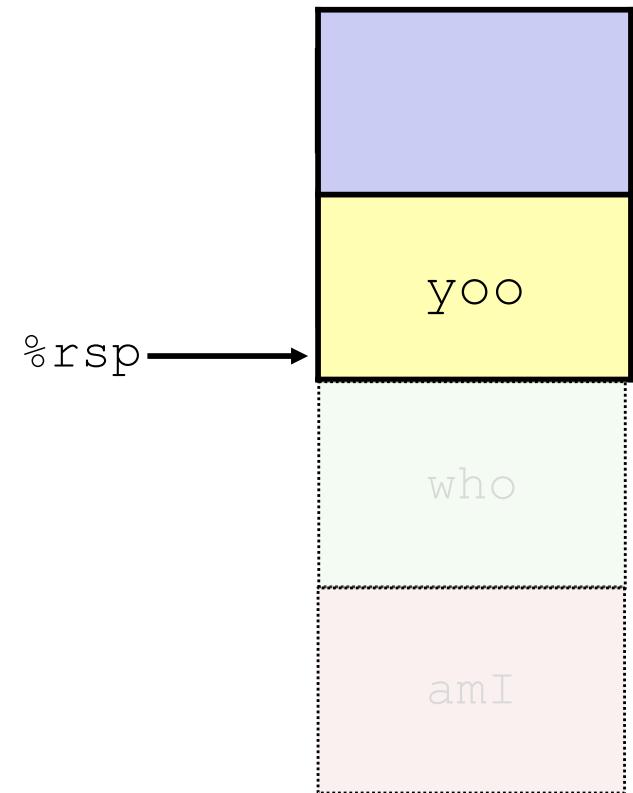
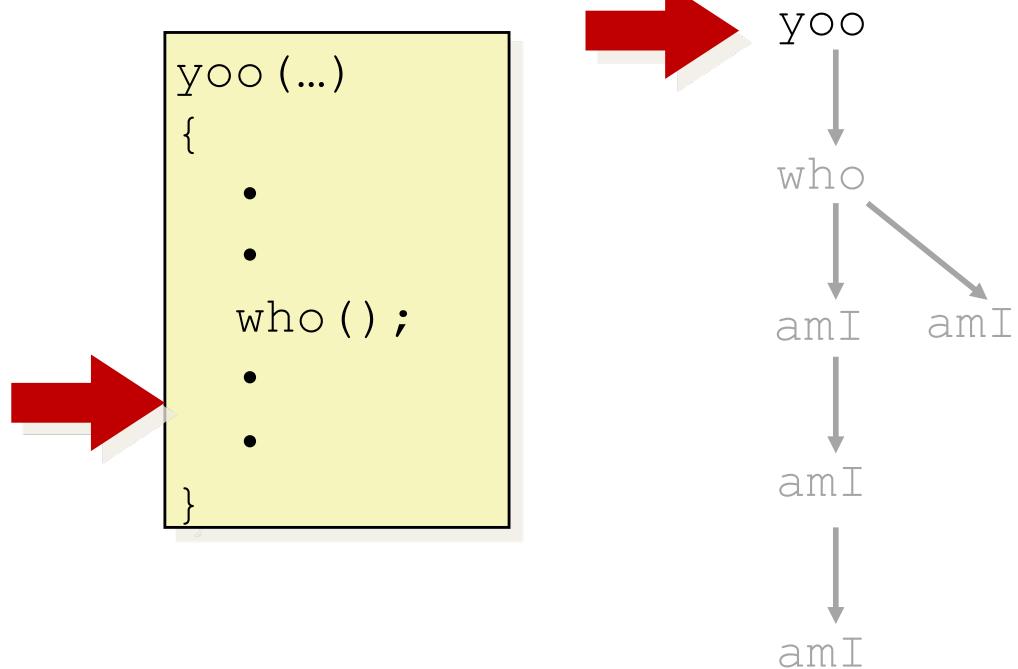
Stack



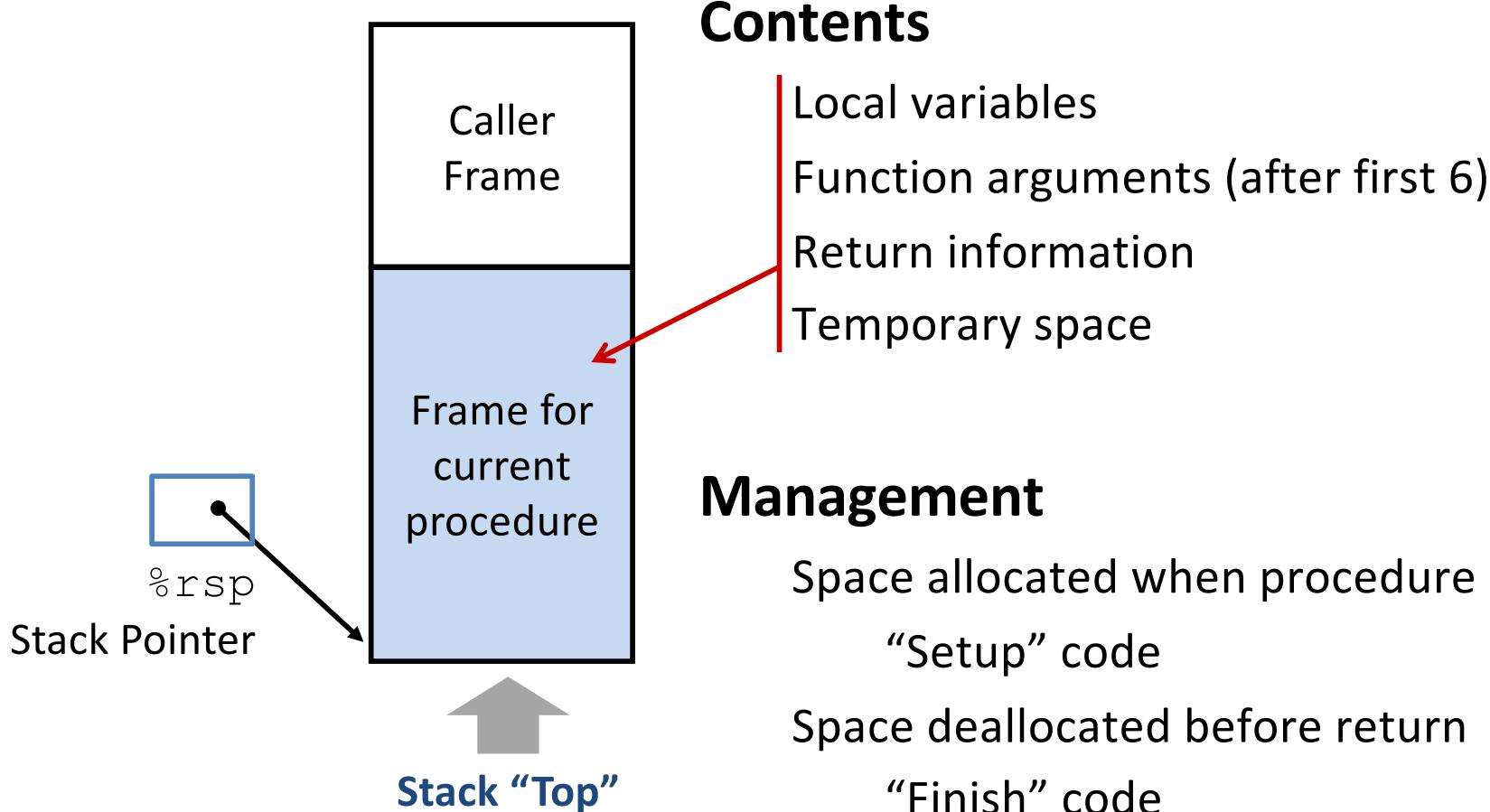
Stack



Stack



Stack frames support procedure calls.



Why not just give every *procedure* a permanent chunk of memory to hold its local variables, etc?

Code Examples

```
void multstore  
    (long x, long y, long *dest)  
{  
    long t = mult2(x, y);  
    *dest = t;  
}
```

```
0000000000400540 <multstore>:  
    400540: push    %rbx          # Save %rbx  
    400541: mov     %rdx,%rbx    # Save dest  
    400544: callq   400550 <mult2> # mult2(x,y)  
    400549: mov     %rax,(%rbx)   # Save at dest  
    40054c: pop    %rbx          # Restore %rbx  
    40054d: retq               # Return
```

```
long mult2(long a,  
          long b) {  
    long s = a * b;  
    return s;  
}
```

```
0000000000400550 <mult2>:  
    400550: mov     %rdi,%rax    # a  
    400553: imul   %rsi,%rax    # a * b  
    400557: retq               # Return
```

Procedure Control Flow Instructions

Procedure call: `callq label`

1. Push return address on stack
2. Jump to *label*

Return address: Address of instruction after `call`. Example:

```
400544: callq 400550 <mult2>
400549: movq    %rax, (%rbx)
```

Procedure return: `retq`

1. Pop return address from stack
2. Jump to address

Call Example (step 1)

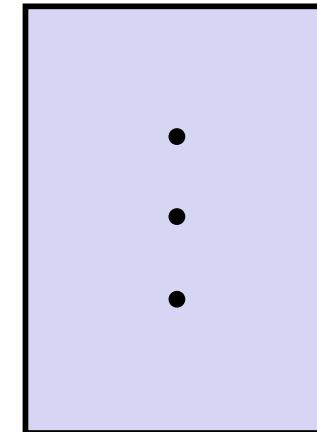
```
000000000400540 <multstore>:
```

```
•  
•  
400544: callq 400550 <mult2>  
400549: mov    %rax, (%rbx)  
•  
•
```

```
000000000400550 <mult2>:
```

```
400550: mov    %rdi, %rax  
•  
•  
400557: retq
```

0x130
0x128
0x120



%rsp 0x120

%rip 0x400544

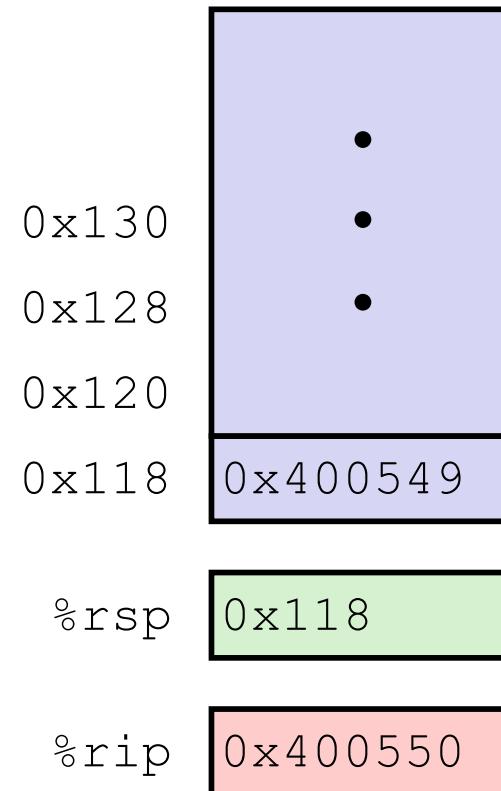
Call Example (step 2)

```
000000000400540 <multstore>:
```

```
•  
•  
400544: callq 400550 <mult2>  
400549: mov    %rax, (%rbx)  
•  
•
```

```
000000000400550 <mult2>:
```

```
400550: mov    %rdi, %rax  
•  
•  
400557: retq
```



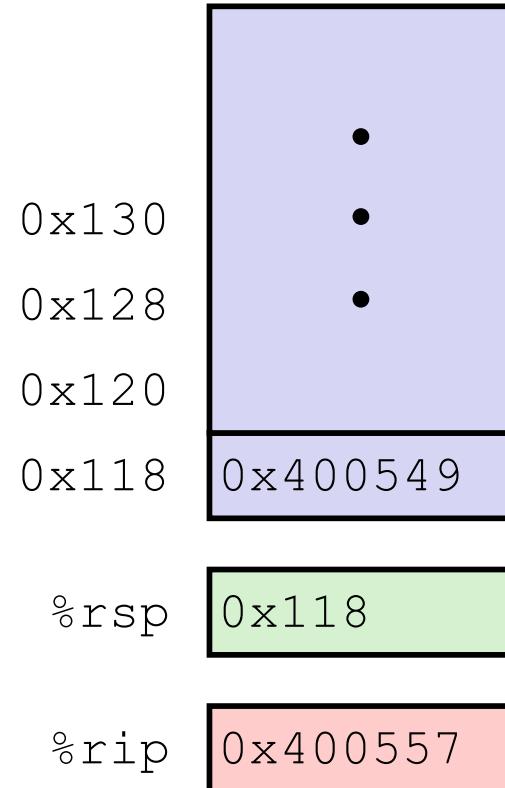
Return Example (step 1)

```
0000000000400540 <multstore>:
```

```
•  
•  
400544: callq 400550 <mult2>  
400549: mov    %rax, (%rbx)  
•  
•
```

```
0000000000400550 <mult2>:
```

```
400550: mov    %rdi, %rax  
•  
•  
400557: retq
```



Return Example (step 2)

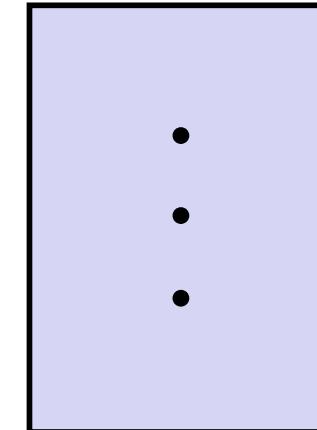
```
0000000000400540 <multstore>:
```

```
•  
•  
400544: callq 400550 <mult2>  
400549: mov    %rax, (%rbx)  
•  
•
```

```
0000000000400550 <mult2>:
```

```
400550: mov    %rdi, %rax  
•  
•  
400557: retq
```

0x130
0x128
0x120

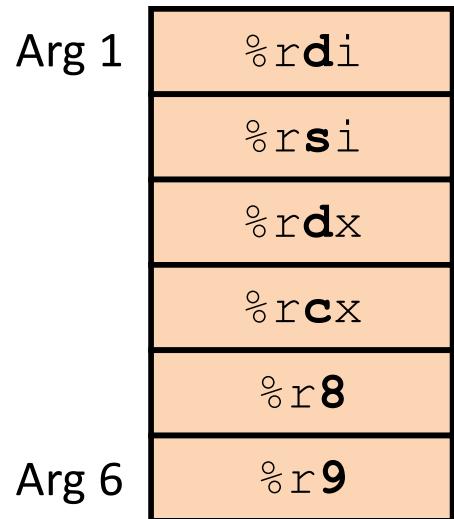


%rsp 0x120

%rip 0x400549

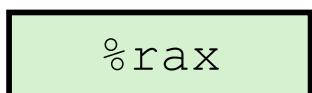
Procedure Data Flow

First 6 arguments passed
in registers

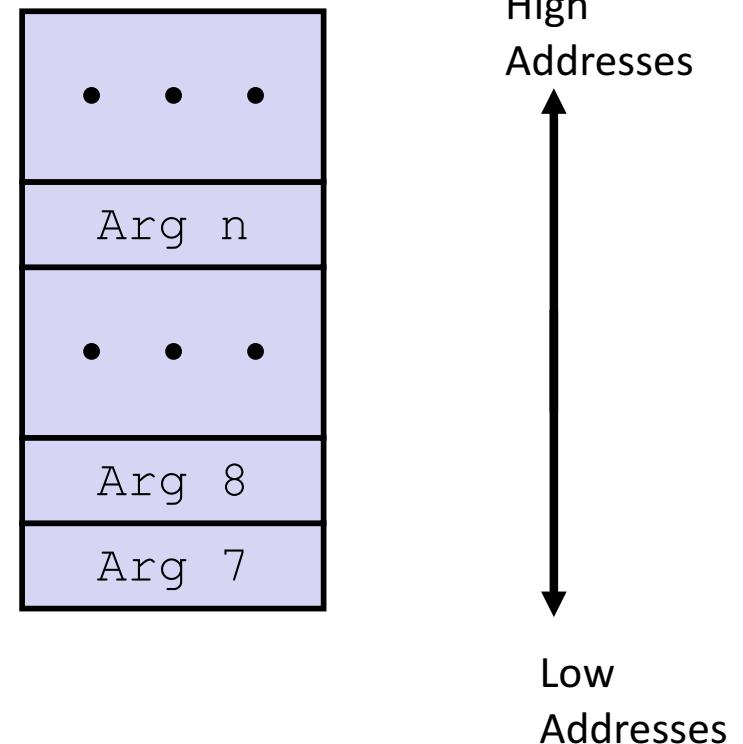


Diane's
Silk
Dress
Costs
\$8 9

Return value

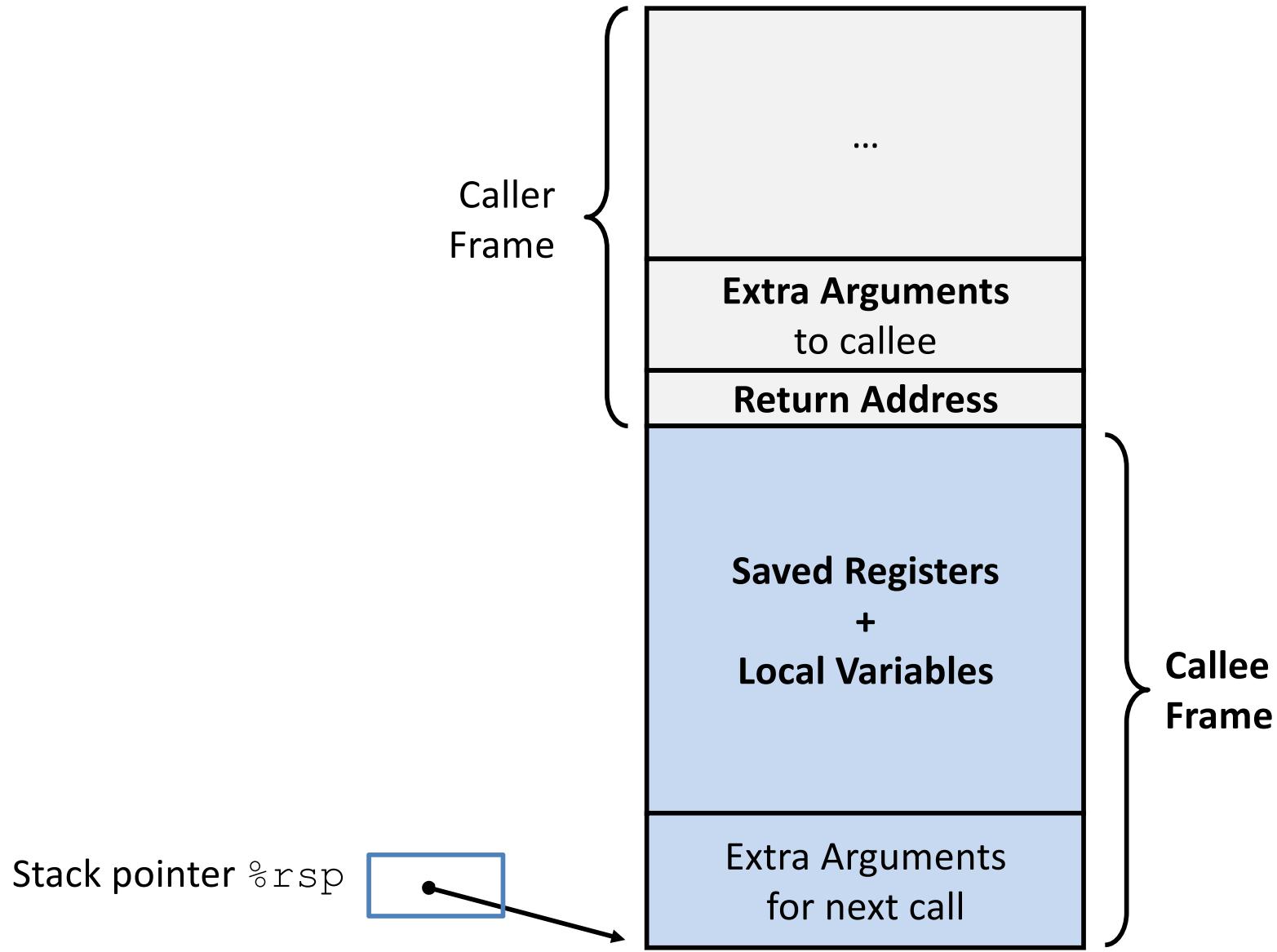


Remaining arguments passed
on stack (in memory)

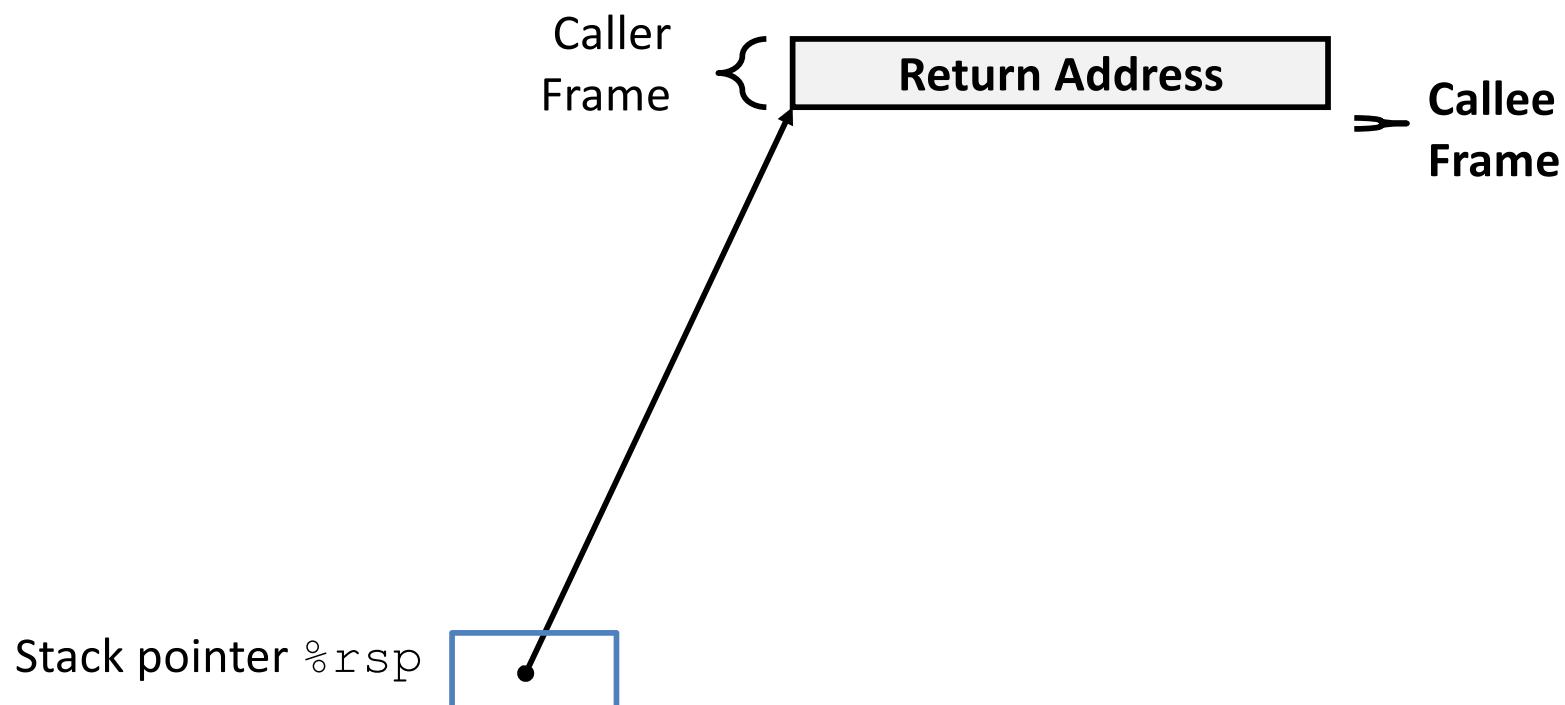


Only allocate stack space when needed

Stack Frame



Common Stack Frame



Data Flow Examples

```
void multstore  
    (long x, long y, long *dest)  
{  
    long t = mult2(x, y);  
    *dest = t;  
}
```

```
0000000000400540 <multstore>:  
    # x in %rdi, y in %rsi, dest in %rdx  
    • • •  
    400541: movq    %rdx,%rbx          # Save dest  
    400544: callq   400550 <mult2>      # mult2(x,y)  
    # t in %rax  
    400549: movq    %rax,(%rbx)        # Save at dest  
    • • •
```

```
long mult2(long a,  
           long b){  
    long s = a * b;  
    return s;  
}
```

```
0000000000400550 <mult2>:  
    # a in %rdi, b in %rsi  
    400550: movq    %rdi,%rax          # a  
    400553: imul    %rsi,%rax          # a * b  
    # s in %rax  
    400557: retq    # Return
```

Example: increment

```
long increment(long* p, long val) {  
    long x = *p;  
    long y = x + val;  
    *p = y;  
    return x;  
}
```

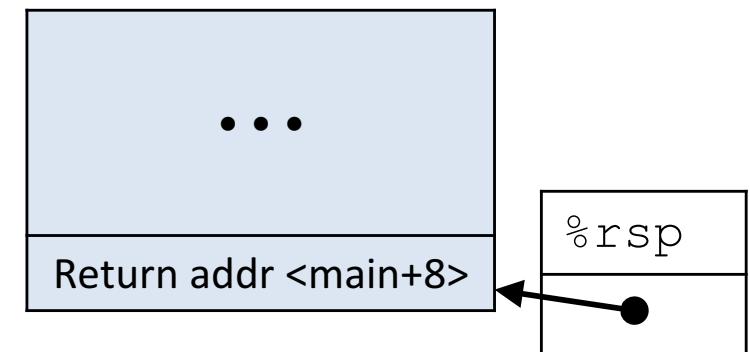
```
increment:  
    movq    (%rdi), %rax  
    addq    %rax, %rsi  
    movq    %rsi, (%rdi)  
    ret
```

Register	Use(s)
%rdi	Argument p
%rsi	Argument val , y
%rax	x , Return value

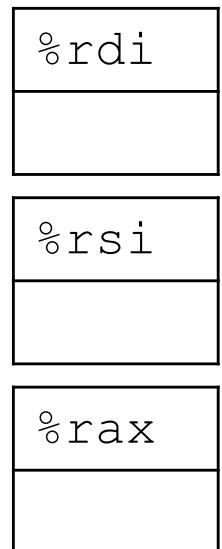
Procedure Call Example (initial state)

```
long call_incr() {  
    long v1 = 240;  
    long v2 = increment(&v1, 61);  
    return v1+v2;  
}
```

Initial Stack Structure



```
call_incr:  
    subq    $16, %rsp  
    movq    $240, 8(%rsp)  
    movl    $61, %esi  
    leaq    8(%rsp), %rdi  
    call    increment  
    addq    8(%rsp), %rax  
    addq    $16, %rsp  
    ret
```



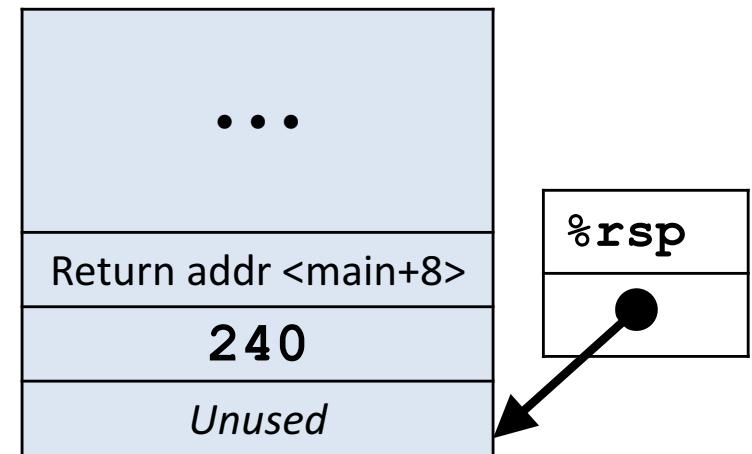
Procedure Call Example (step 1)

```
long call_incr() {  
    long v1 = 240;  
    long v2 = increment(&v1, 61);  
    return v1+v2;  
}
```

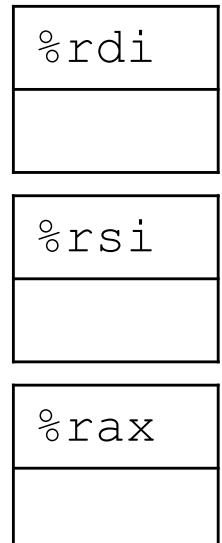
Space for v1 →
Compiler allocated extra space for alignment →

```
call_incr:  
    subq $16, %rsp  
    movq $240, 8(%rsp)  
    movl $61, %esi  
    leaq 8(%rsp), %rdi  
    call increment  
    addq 8(%rsp), %rax  
    addq $16, %rsp  
    ret
```

Stack Structure



} Allocate space for local vars

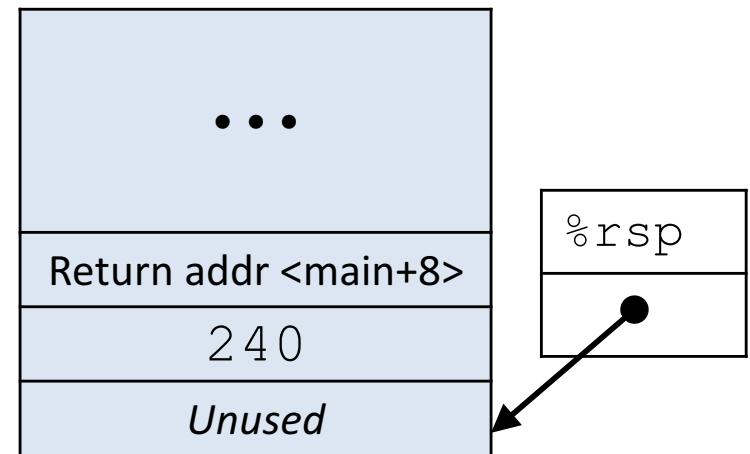


Procedure Call Example (step 2)

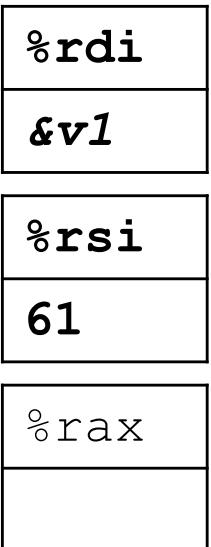
```
long call_incr() {  
    long v1 = 240;  
    long v2 = increment(&v1, 61);  
    return v1+v2;  
}
```

```
call_incr:  
    subq    $16, %rsp  
    movq    $240, 8(%rsp)  
    movl    $61, %esi  
    leaq    8(%rsp), %rdi  
    call    increment  
    addq    8(%rsp), %rax  
    addq    $16, %rsp  
    ret
```

Stack Structure



} Set up args for call
to increment



Aside: `movl` is used because 61 is a small positive value that fits in 32 bits. High order bits of `%rsi` get set to zero automatically.
It takes *one less byte* to encode a `movl` than a `movq`.

Procedure Call Example (step 3)

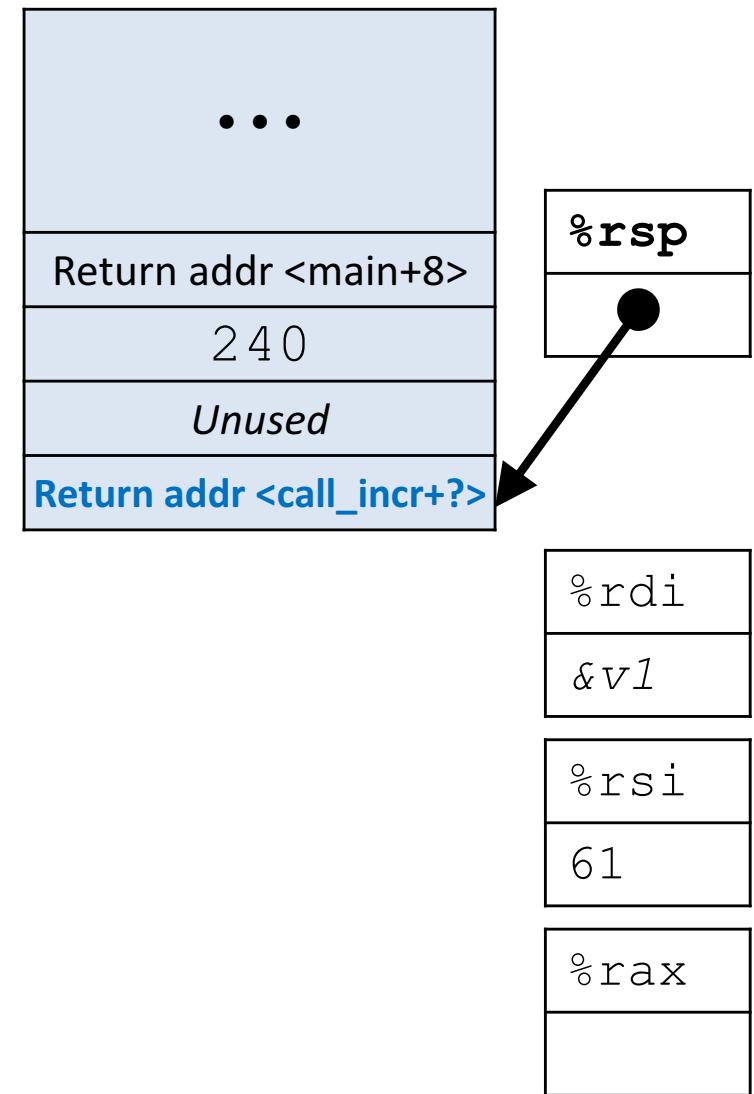
```
long call_incr() {  
    long v1 = 240;  
    long v2 = increment(&v1, 61);  
    return v1+v2;  
}
```

```
call_incr:  
    subq    $16, %rsp  
    movq    $240, 8(%rsp)  
    movl    $61, %esi  
    leaq    8(%rsp), %rdi  
    call    increment  
    addq    8(%rsp), %rax  
    addq    $16, %rsp  
    ret
```

increment:

```
    movq    (%rdi), %rax  
    addq    %rax, %rsi  
    movq    %rsi, (%rdi)  
    ret
```

Stack Structure

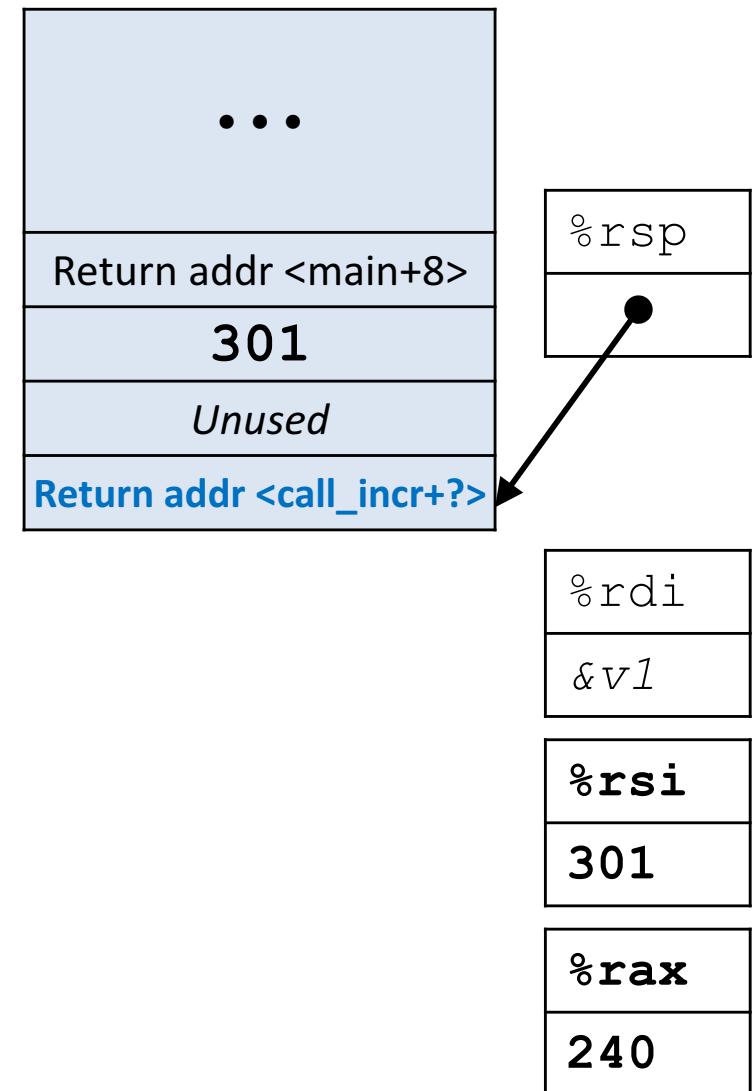


Procedure Call Example (step 4)

```
long call_incr() {  
    long v1 = 240;  
    long v2 = increment(&v1, 61);  
}  
  
call_i  
subq  
movq }  
movl $61, %esi  
leaq 8(%rsp), %rdi  
call increment  
addq 8(%rsp), %rax  
addq $16, %rsp  
ret
```

```
increment:  
    movq (%rdi), %rax # x = *p  
    addq %rax, %rsi    # y = x+61  
    movq %rsi, (%rdi) # *p = y  
    ret
```

Stack Structure



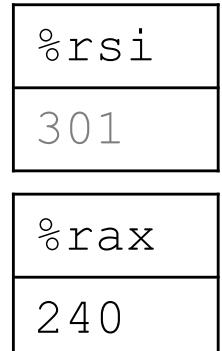
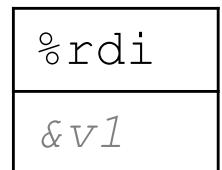
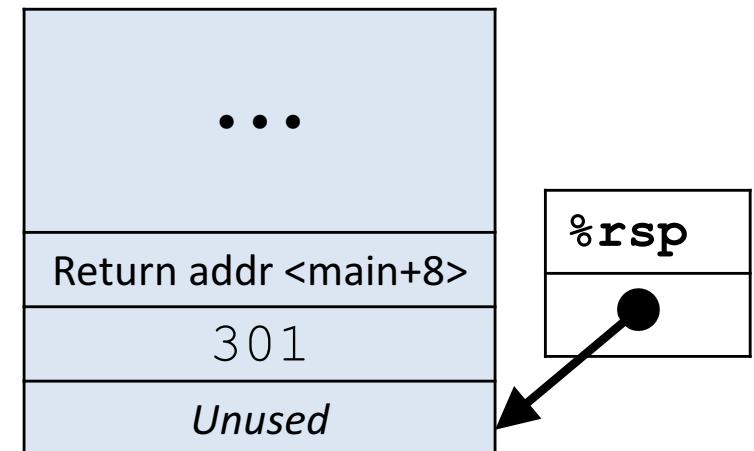
Procedure Call Example (step 5)

```
long call_incr() {  
    long v1 = 240;  
    long v2 = increment(&v1, 61);  
    return v1+v2;  
}
```

```
call_incr:  
    subq    $16, %rsp  
    movq    $240, 8(%rsp)  
    movl    $61, %esi  
    leaq    8(%rsp), %rdi  
    call    increment  
    addq    8(%rsp), %rax  
    addq    $16, %rsp  
    ret
```

```
increment:  
    movq    (%rdi), %rax # x = *p  
    addq    %rax, %rsi   # y = x+61  
    movq    %rsi, (%rdi) # *p = y  
    ret
```

Stack Structure

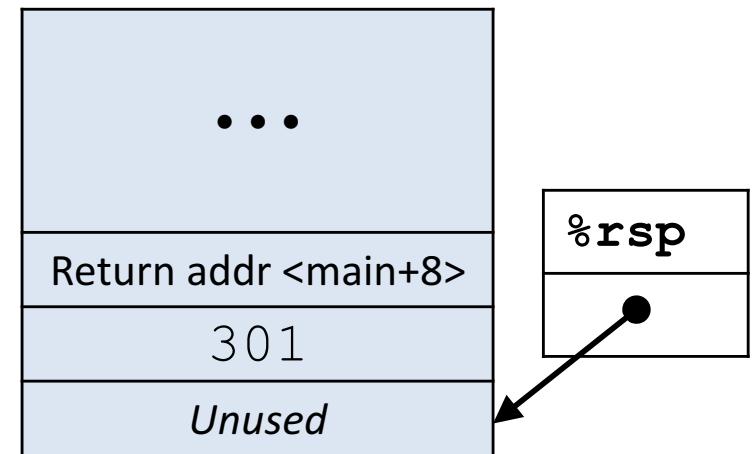


Procedure Call Example (step 6)

```
long call_incr() {  
    long v1 = 240;  
    long v2 = increment(&v1, 61);  
    return v1+v2;  
}
```

```
call_incr:  
    subq    $16, %rsp  
    movq    $240, 8(%rsp)  
    movl    $61, %esi  
    leaq    8(%rsp), %rdi  
    call    increment  
    addq    8(%rsp), %rax ← Update %rax: v1+v2  
    addq    $16, %rsp  
    ret
```

Stack Structure

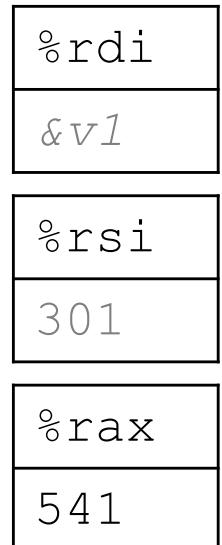
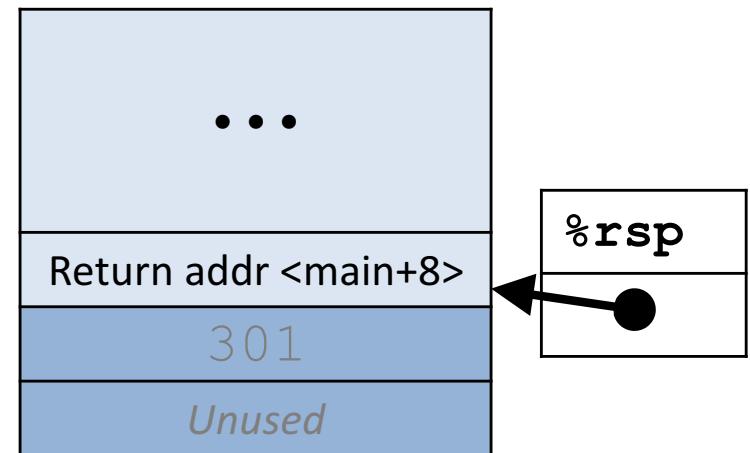


Procedure Call Example (step 7)

```
long call_incr() {  
    long v1 = 240;  
    long v2 = increment(&v1, 61);  
    return v1+v2;  
}
```

```
call_incr:  
    subq    $16, %rsp  
    movq    $240, 8(%rsp)  
    movl    $61, %esi  
    leaq    8(%rsp), %rdi  
    call    increment  
    addq    8(%rsp), %rax  
addq    $16, %rsp ← De-allocate space for local vars  
    ret
```

Stack Structure

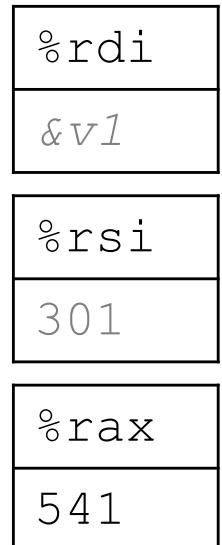
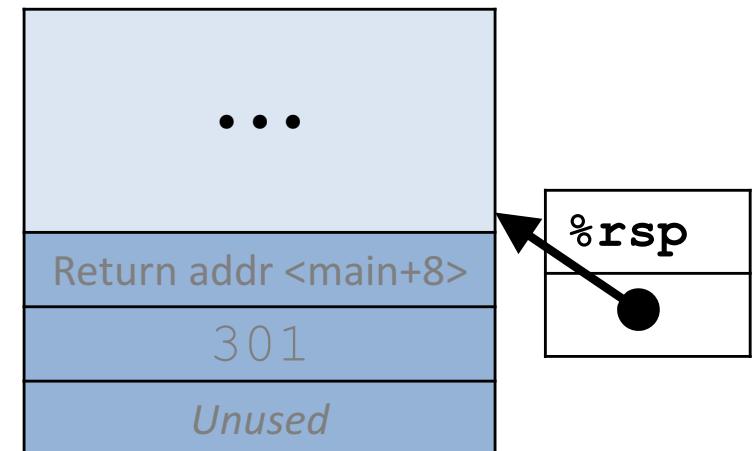


Procedure Call Example (return from call_incr)

```
long call_incr() {  
    long v1 = 240;  
    long v2 = increment(&v1, 61);  
    return v1+v2;  
}
```

```
main:  
...  
call    call_incr  
...
```

Stack Structure



Register Saving Conventions

yoo calls who:

Caller *Callee*

Will register contents still be there after a procedure call?

```
yoo:  
  . . .  
  movq $12345, %rbx  
  call who  
  addq %rbx, %rax  
  . . .  
  ret
```

```
who:  
  . . .  
  addq %rdi, %rbx  
  . . .  
  ret
```

Conventions:

Caller Save

Caller saves temporary values in its frame **before calling**

Callee Save

Callee saves temporary values in its frame **before using**

x86-64 64-bit Registers: Usage Conventions

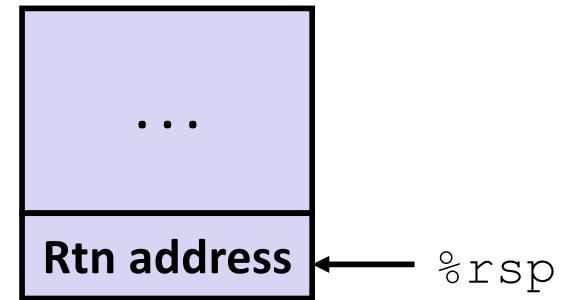
%rax	Return value – Caller saved
%rbx	Callee saved
%rcx	Argument #4 – Caller saved
%rdx	Argument #3 – Caller saved
%rsi	Argument #2 – Caller saved
%rdi	Argument #1 – Caller saved
%rsp	Stack pointer
%rbp	Callee saved
%r8	Argument #5 – Caller saved
%r9	Argument #6 – Caller saved
%r10	Caller saved
%r11	Caller Saved
%r12	Callee saved
%r13	Callee saved
%r14	Callee saved
%r15	Callee saved

Callee-Saved Example (step 1)

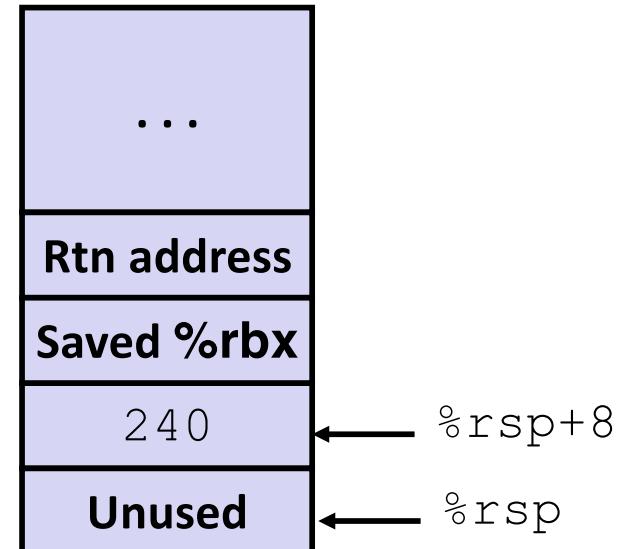
```
long call_incr2(long x) {  
    long v1 = 240;  
    long v2 = increment(&v1, 61);  
    return x+v2;  
}
```

```
call_incr2:  
    pushq  %rbx  
    subq   $16, %rsp  
    movq   %rdi, %rbx  
    movq   $240, 8(%rsp)  
    movl   $61, %esi  
    leaq   8(%rsp), %rdi  
    call   increment  
    addq   %rbx, %rax  
    addq   $16, %rsp  
    popq   %rbx  
    ret
```

Initial Stack Structure



Resulting Stack Structure

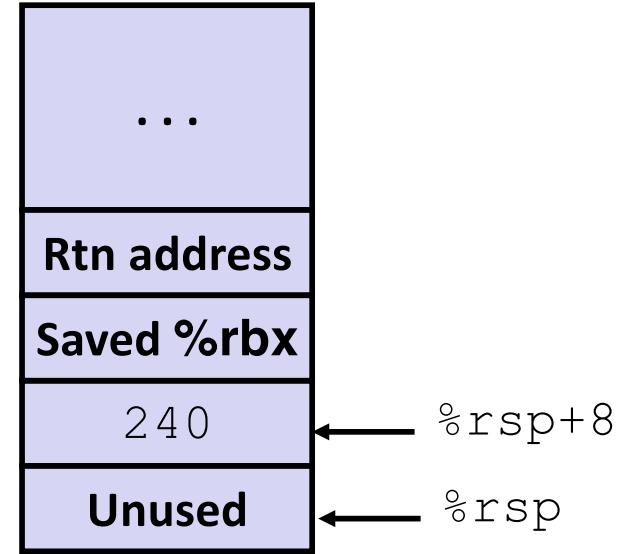


Callee-Saved Example (step 2)

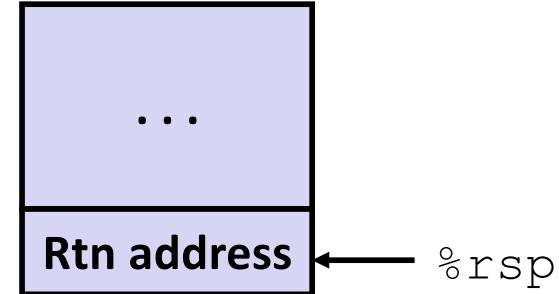
```
long call_incr2(long x) {  
    long v1 = 240;  
    long v2 = increment(&v1, 61);  
    return x+v2;  
}
```

```
call_incr2:  
    pushq %rbx  
    subq $16, %rsp  
    movq %rdi, %rbx  
    movq $240, 8(%rsp)  
    movl $61, %esi  
    leaq 8(%rsp), %rdi  
    call increment  
    addq %rbx, %rax  
addq $16, %rsp  
popq %rbx  
    ret
```

Stack Structure



Pre-return Stack Structure



A Puzzle

C function body:

```
*p = d;  
return x - c;
```

assembly:

```
movsbl %dl,%edx  
movl %edx,(%rsi)  
movswl %di,%edi  
subl %edi,%ecx  
movl %ecx,%eax
```

Write the C function header, types, and order of parameters.

movsbl = move sign-extending a byte to a long (4-byte)

movswl = move sign-extending a word (2-byte) to a long (4-byte)

Recursive Function

```
/* Recursive popcount */
long pcount_r(unsigned long x) {
    if (x == 0) {
        return 0;
    } else {
        return (x & 1)
            + pcount_r(x >> 1);
    }
}
```

```
pcount_r:
    movl    $0, %eax
    testq   %rdi, %rdi
    je      .L6
    pushq   %rbx
    movq   %rdi, %rbx
    andl    $1, %ebx
    shrq   %rdi
    call    pcount_r
    addq   %rbx, %rax
    popq   %rbx
.L6:
    rep; ret
```

Recursive Function: Base Case

```
/* Recursive popcount */
long pcount_r(unsigned long x) {
    if (x == 0) {
        return 0;
    } else {
        return (x & 1)
            + pcount_r(x >> 1);
    }
}
```

```
pcount_r:
    movl    $0, %eax
    testq   %rdi, %rdi
    je      .L6
    pushq   %rbx
    movq   %rdi, %rbx
    andl    $1, %ebx
    shrq   %rdi
    call    pcount_r
    addq   %rbx, %rax
    popq   %rbx
```

.L6:

rep; ret

Trick because some HW
doesn't like jumping to ret

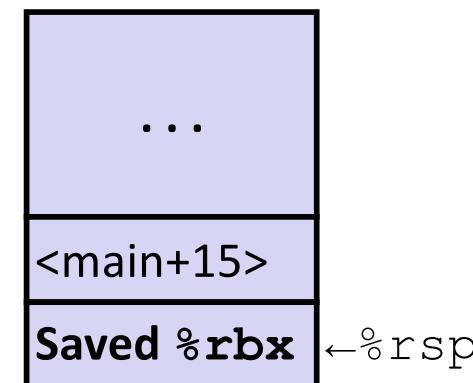
Register	Use(s)	Type
%rdi	x	Argument
%rax	Return value	Return value

Recursive Function: Register Save

```
/* Recursive popcount */
long pcount_r(unsigned long x) {
    if (x == 0) {
        return 0;
    } else {
        return (x & 1)
            + pcount_r(x >> 1);
    }
}
```

```
pcount_r:
    movl    $0, %eax
    testq   %rdi, %rdi
    je      .L6
    pushq   %rbx
    movq   %rdi, %rbx
    andl   $1, %ebx
    shrq   %rdi
    call   pcount_r
    addq   %rbx, %rax
    popq   %rbx
.L6:
    rep; ret
```

Register	Use(s)	Type
%rdi	x	Argument

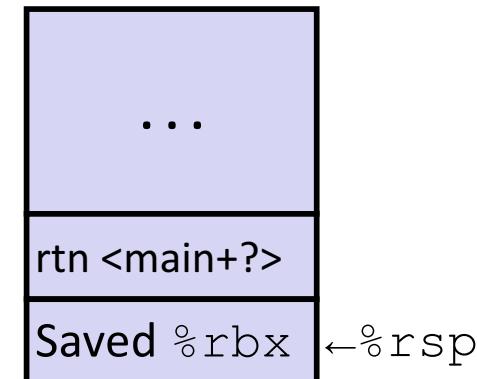


Recursive Function: Call Setup

```
/* Recursive popcount */
long pcount_r(unsigned long x) {
    if (x == 0) {
        return 0;
    } else {
        return (x & 1)
            + pcount_r(x >> 1);
    }
}
```

```
pcount_r:
    movl    $0, %eax
    testq   %rdi, %rdi
    je      .L6
    pushq   %rbx
    movq    %rdi, %rbx
    andl    $1, %ebx
    shrq    %rdi
    call    pcount_r
    addq    %rbx, %rax
    popq   %rbx
.L6:
    rep; ret
```

Register	Use(s)	Type
%rdi	x >> 1	Recursive arg
%rbx	x & 1	Callee-saved

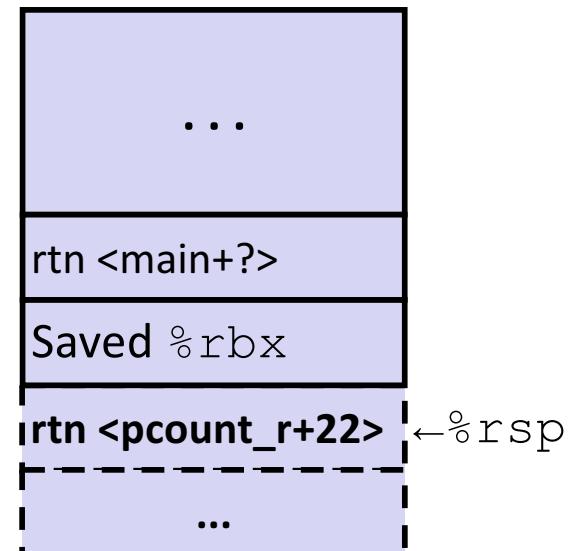


Recursive Function: Call

```
/* Recursive popcount */
long pcount_r(unsigned long x) {
    if (x == 0) {
        return 0;
    } else {
        return (x & 1)
            + pcount_r(x >> 1);
    }
}
```

```
pcount_r:
    movl    $0, %eax
    testq   %rdi, %rdi
    je      .L6
    pushq   %rbx
    movq    %rdi, %rbx
    andl    $1, %ebx
    shrq    %rdi
    call    pcount_r
    addq    %rbx, %rax
    popq    %rbx
.L6:
    rep; ret
```

Register	Use(s)	Type
%rbx	x & 1	Callee-saved
%rax	Recursive call return value	-

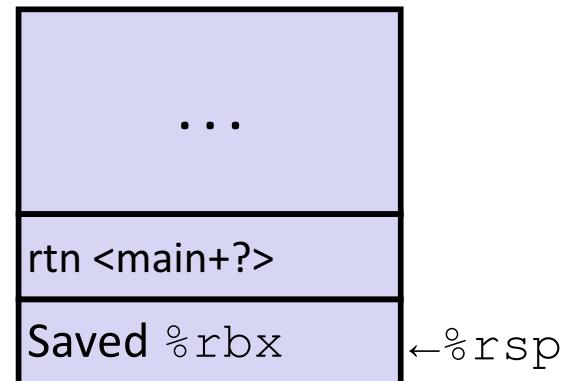


Recursive Function: Result

```
/* Recursive popcount */
long pcount_r(unsigned long x) {
    if (x == 0) {
        return 0;
    } else {
        return (x & 1)
            + pcount_r(x >> 1);
    }
}
```

```
pcount_r:
    movl    $0, %eax
    testq   %rdi, %rdi
    je      .L6
    pushq   %rbx
    movq   %rdi, %rbx
    andl   $1, %ebx
    shrq   %rdi
    call   pcount_r
    addq   %rbx, %rax
    popq   %rbx
.L6:
    rep; ret
```

Register	Use(s)	Type
%rbx	x & 1	Callee-saved
%rax	Return value	

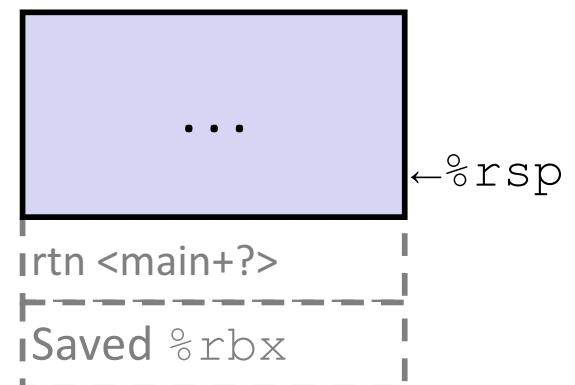


Recursive Function: Completion

```
/* Recursive popcount */
long pcount_r(unsigned long x) {
    if (x == 0) {
        return 0;
    } else {
        return (x & 1)
            + pcount_r(x >> 1);
    }
}
```

```
pcount_r:
    movl    $0, %eax
    testq   %rdi, %rdi
    je      .L6
    pushq   %rbx
    movq    %rdi, %rbx
    andl    $1, %ebx
    shrq    %rdi
    call    pcount_r
    addq    %rbx, %rax
    popq    %rbx
.L6:
    rep; ret
```

Register	Use(s)	Type
%rax	Return value	



x86-64 stack storage example

(1)

```
long int call_proc()
{
    long x1 = 1;
    int x2 = 2;
    short x3 = 3;
    char x4 = 4;
    proc(x1, &x1, x2, &x2,
          x3, &x3, x4, &x4);
    return (x1+x2) * (x3-x4);
}
```

```
call_proc:
    subq $32,%rsp
    movq $1,16(%rsp) # x1
    movl $2,24(%rsp) # x2
    movw $3,28(%rsp) # x3
    movb $4,31(%rsp) # x4
    • • •
```

Return address to caller of call_proc

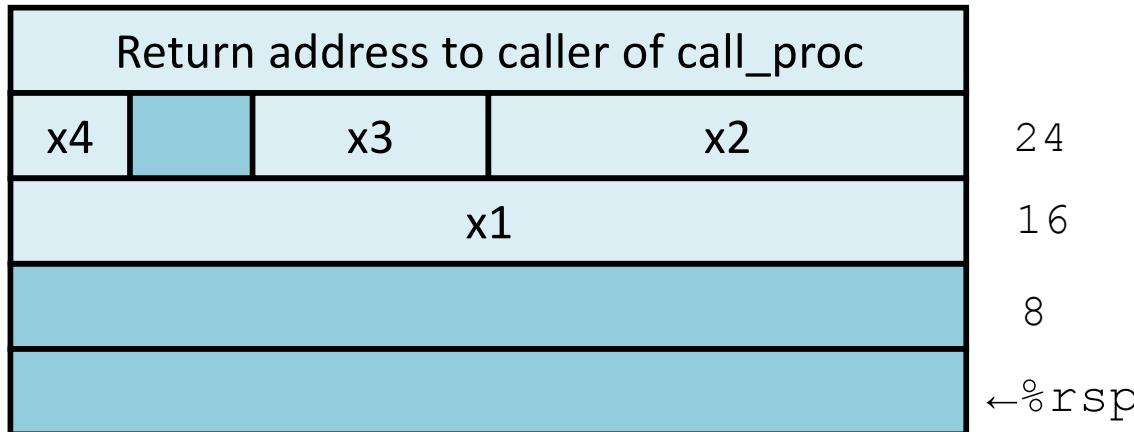
←%rsp

x86-64 stack storage example

(2) Allocate local vars

```
long int call_proc()
{
    long x1 = 1;
    int x2 = 2;
    short x3 = 3;
    char x4 = 4;
    proc(x1, &x1, x2, &x2,
          x3, &x3, x4, &x4);
    return (x1+x2) * (x3-x4);
}
```

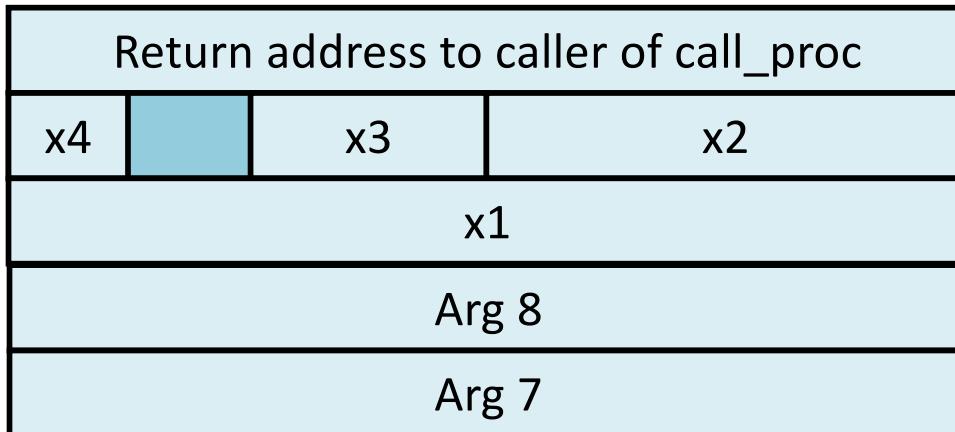
```
call_proc:  
    subq    $32,%rsp  
    movq    $1,16(%rsp)    # x1  
    movl    $2,24(%rsp)    # x2  
    movw    $3,28(%rsp)    # x3  
    movb    $4,31(%rsp)    # x4  
    • • •
```



x86-64 stack storage example

(3) setup args to proc

```
long int call_proc()
{
    long x1 = 1;
    int x2 = 2;
    short x3 = 3;
    char x4 = 4;
    proc(x1, &x1, x2, &x2,
          x3, &x3, x4, &x4);
    return (x1+x2) * (x3-x4);
}
```



```
call_proc:
```

```
    • • •  

    leaq   24(%rsp),%rcx # &x2  

    leaq   16(%rsp),%rsi # &x1  

    leaq   31(%rsp),%rax # &x4  

    movq   %rax,8(%rsp) # ...  

    movl   $4,%rsp        # 4  

    leaq   28(%rsp),%r9 # &x3  

    movl   $3,%r8d        # 3  

    movl   $2,%edx        # 2  

    movq   $1,%rdi        # 1  

    call   proc  

    • • •
```

24

16

8

←%rsp

Arguments passed in (in order): rdi,
rsi, rdx, rcx, r8, r9

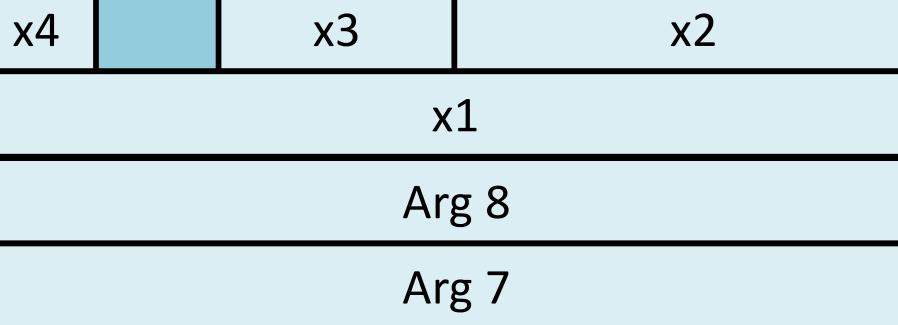
x86-64 stack storage example

(4) after call to proc

```
long int call_proc()
{
    long x1 = 1;
    int x2 = 2;
    short x3 = 3;
    char x4 = 4;
    proc(x1, &x1, x2, &x2,
          x3, &x3, x4, &x4);
    return (x1+x2) * (x3-x4);
}
```

```
call_proc:
    . . .
    movswl 28(%rsp),%eax # x3
    movsb1 31(%rsp),%edx # x4
    subl %edx,%eax # x3-x4
    cltq # sign-extend %eax->rax
    movslq 24(%rsp),%rdx # x2
    addq 16(%rsp),%rdx # x1+x2
    imulq %rdx,%rax # *
    addq $32,%rsp
    ret
```

Return address to caller of call_proc



24

16

8

←%rsp

x86-64 stack storage example

(5) deallocate local vars

```
long int call_proc()
{
    long x1 = 1;
    int x2 = 2;
    short x3 = 3;
    char x4 = 4;
    proc(x1, &x1, x2, &x2,
          x3, &x3, x4, &x4);
    return (x1+x2) * (x3-x4);
}
```

```
call_proc:
    . . .
    movswl 28(%rsp), %eax
    movsb1 31(%rsp), %edx
    subl    %edx, %eax
    cltq
    movslq 24(%rsp), %rdx
    addq    16(%rsp), %rdx
    imulq   %rdx, %rax
addq    $32,%rsp
ret
```

Return address to caller of call_proc

←%rsp

Procedure Summary

call, ret, push, pop

Stack discipline fits procedure call / return.*

If P calls Q: Q (and calls by Q) returns before P

Conventions support arbitrary function calls.

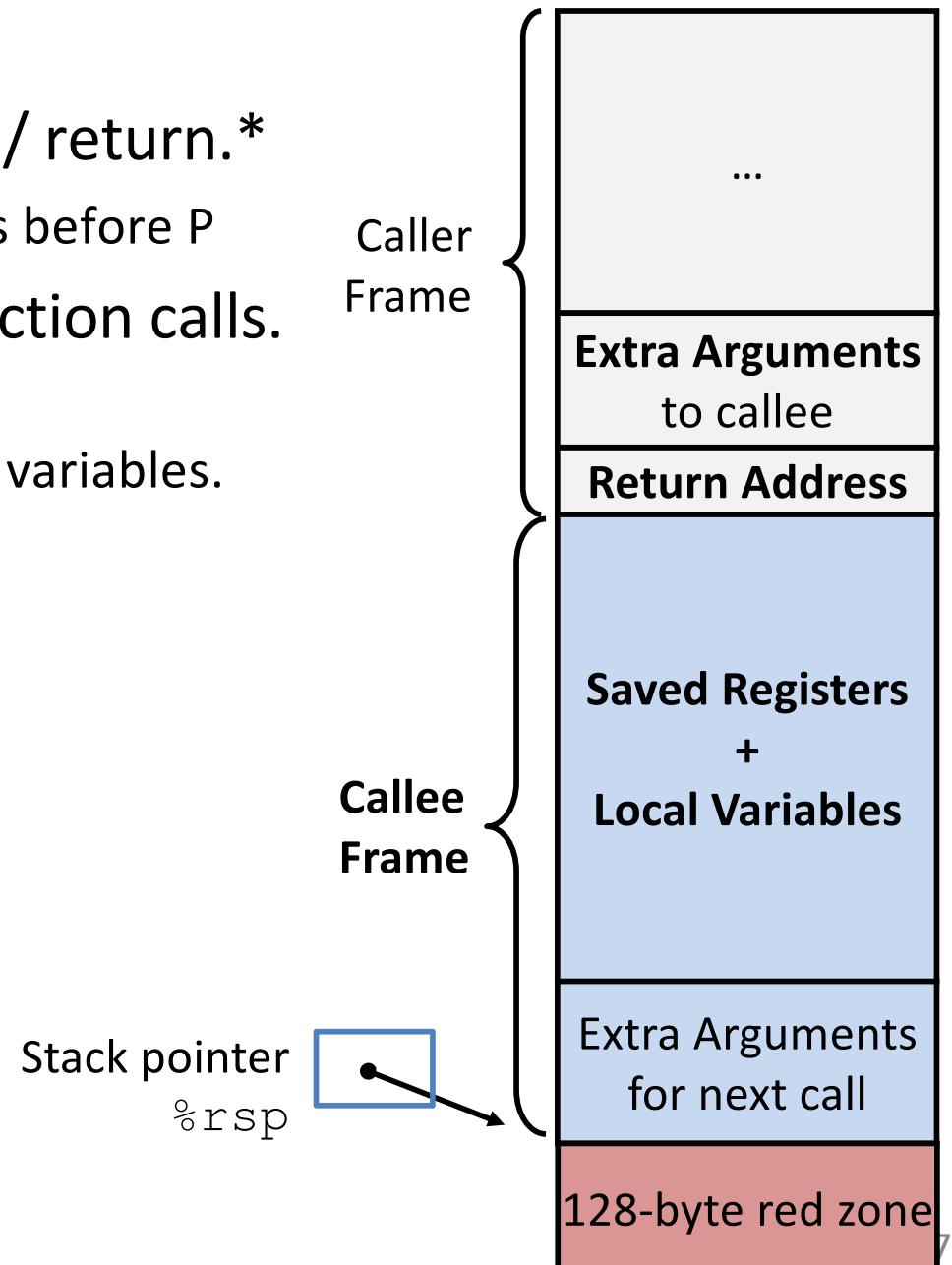
Register-save conventions.

Stack frame saves extra args or local variables.

Result returned in **%rax**

%rax	Return value – Caller saved
%rbx	Callee saved
%rcx	Argument #4 – Caller saved
%rdx	Argument #3 – Caller saved
%rsi	Argument #2 – Caller saved
%rdi	Argument #1 – Caller saved
%rsp	Stack pointer
%rbp	Callee saved

%r8	Argument #5 – Caller saved
%r9	Argument #6 – Caller saved
%r10	Caller saved
%r11	Caller Saved
%r12	Callee saved
%r13	Callee saved
%r14	Callee saved
%r15	Callee saved



*Take 251 to learn about languages where it doesn't.