Tips for WIL students: getting work done

ACE WIL

Prioritize your work tasks

- determine the 2-3 most important tasks for the day and focus on these first
- prioritize based on importance and urgency
  - first focus on important and urgent work
  - then move on to important, non-urgent work
  - avoid tasks that aren't important (even if they seem urgent), or deal with them at the end of the day
- prioritize the most valuable work
- estimate level of effort and start with those that will take the longest
- be flexible, realistic, and know when to stop work on a task that's no longer a priority
- take stock at the end of the day and plan for tomorrow

Block time for focussed work

- important work often needs deeper thinking and more focussed concentration
- book a block of time (90 minutes is recommended) in your schedule, as if you're attending a meeting. This will signal that it's time to dive into the work and you aren't available to respond to emails or other interruptions
- try the Pomodoro Technique
  - focus your work in 25-minute bursts using a timer
  - take a 5-minute break
  - repeat up to four times before taking a longer break
  - use an app to help, such as Focus To-do (Android) or Focus Keeper (Apple)

Tell people what you're working on

- stay connected, whether that's through daily 'huddles' or online collaboration tools
- let people know what you're working on to avoid wasted or duplicated efforts.
- be alert to changing priorities and deadlines that may have shifted

Optimize work to match your energy levels

- spend a week tracking your energy throughout the day and note when you're best able to concentrate
- block your time accordingly, so that you're working on the important tasks that require deep-thinking while at your peak
- leave simple, repetitive tasks for other times of the day

Use productivity tools

- if available, use your workplace tools for managing projects
  - ask about creating a private space within those tools for your own tasks and tracking
- use free apps/tools to help you to succeed
  - project management/planning tools, such as Basecamp, Teamwork or Plan
  - kanban-style tools for tracking and visualizing projects and workflows, such as Trello
  - idea tracking and note taking apps, such as Evernote and OneNote

Illustrations by Freepik Stories

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