

Top Tips for Hybrid Learning

for engineering students, from engineering students

From Katelyn Danczyk / Industrial Engineering, Class of 2022

“ I am a fourth-year student at Penn State majoring in industrial engineering and minoring in both engineering leadership development and six sigma methodology. I am the treasurer of Penn State’s Alpha Pi Mu chapter, a facilitator for the Women in Engineering Facilitated Study Group program, a Global Engineering Fellow, and a resident assistant on campus.

In spring 2020, I switched to virtual learning along with the rest of the world. After this, I completed a remote internship with Merck and two more semesters of virtual and hybrid classes. My professors were instrumental in teaching my friends and I how to adjust quickly and to address our needs to learn and work effectively. Some of these skills are listed below to help you be successful this semester, too! As we begin to transition back to in-person instruction, these skills will continue to help you as you pursue your academic goals.”



1 Learn WHERE to Learn

Trust us, your bed is NOT a productive place to work. It's comfortable, but it may be too comfortable. Try finding a favorite spot that helps you focus. You might need to move around during the day. Make sure you are choosing places where you can focus and sit up straight.

2 Develop a Routine or Schedule

Some people work better keeping the same schedule every day. Try going to bed and waking up around the same time. Others might want a day-to-day schedule with each day looking different. Simply setting a structure for your day will keep you on track. Also, give yourself some “buffer time” for technical difficulties.

3 Set Boundaries with your Support System

All of us need to make sure we ask for what we need. Make sure you are open with your friends, family, and roommates about the time commitment you need to make with your schoolwork. Be clear with them about the time you need to set aside to do work and the time that is free time.

4 Create To-Do lists

It can be very easy to get assignments mixed up or to forget about them. Keep a running list or daily to-do list to stay organized. Also, with different Zoom links and websites, it may be smart to bookmark certain pages you'll need to use regularly.

5 Discover HOW you Learn Best

Discover which study strategies work best for you, perhaps by asking others what works best for them. It is important to recognize that certain things might come easier to your friends, and that's okay! Everyone learns at a different pace and in a different way. Be patient with yourself, and you will find the best way for YOU.

6 Be Present During Class Time

Your schedule may be a little unique, making it all the more important to build structure into your day. Make sure you take care of things so that you can be fully present in

class, whether in-person, remote, or asynchronous. Class time is the foundation of your learning. From there, you can determine what you need to review and make time to ask questions.

7 Be Open to Group Projects

Many engineering classes encourage you to work together on assignments. Working with classmates is a great way to build off each other and apply what you have learned. Each of you may have picked up on different key points in the lecture, so reading and working together can help you all understand the whole picture.

8 Communicate Often

The most challenging part of working in groups is communication. Some first-year classes like engineering design focus on group projects to introduce you to engineering. Make sure you communicate reliably to group members so you can be successful!

9 Ask for Help

Penn State has a variety of resources to help you be successful. Don't be afraid to reach out for help, both in and out of the classroom. Professor office hours are a great place to clarify material you learned in lecture or review homework. Advisers can help you with academics and connect you with career resources and other services you need. Penn State Learning offers tutoring and guided study groups for most engineering entrance-to-major courses such as physics, calculus, and chemistry. All these things are still happening virtually!

10 Take Care of Yourself

All of these tips have one thing in common: helping you take care of yourself. Find ways to recharge, get outside, have fun, and know where the resources are to help you along the way!

Adapted from the “Top Tips for Virtual Learning,” developed by Kayli Rentzel (2020).

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