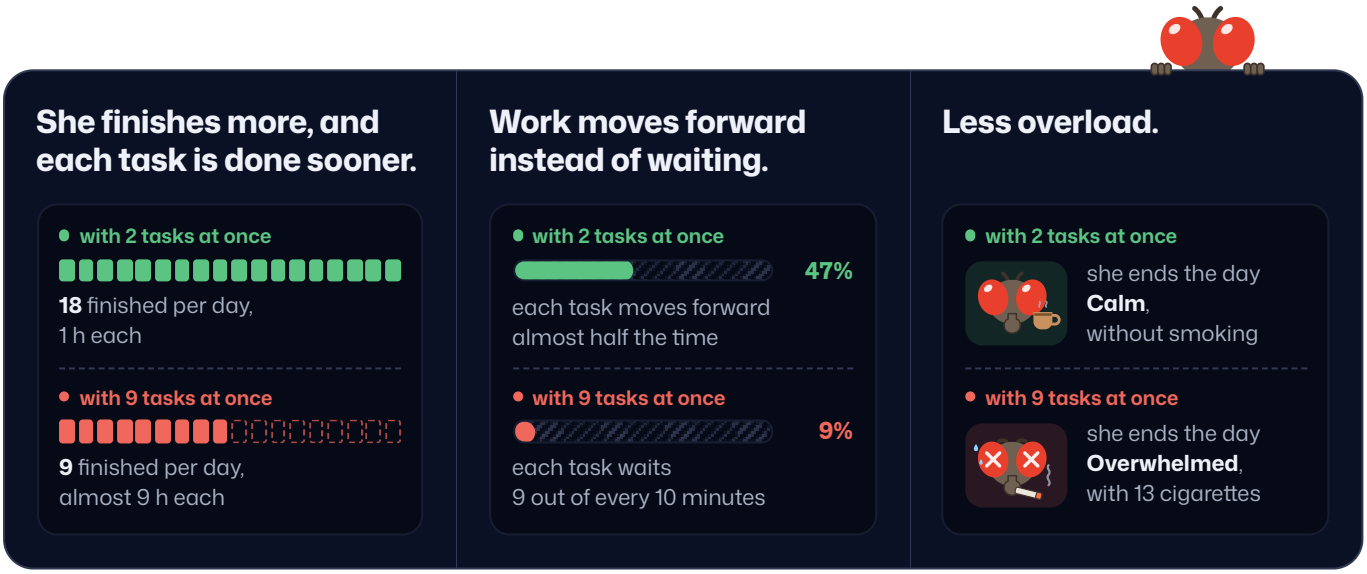
Busy all day. So what did you finish?

Mosca del WIP is a one-minute game. You choose how many tasks an office fly can have started at once, from 1 to 10, and you watch her workday in front of her board. That number is her limit on work in progress, or WIP.

Inside there is a computer experiment, with the real map of a fruit fly's brain and office rules inspired by studies with real people. The computer played 200 days with each limit and we took the average.

What did the fly gain by limiting her WIP?



In the game, average of 200 days played.

What we found

One task at a time wasn't the best

In the game, with 1 task at once the fly finishes 15.9 per day, fewer than with 2. If that task is left waiting on someone, she has nothing to do. With up to 3 she still ends the day Calm, and that is her sustainable limit.

What's started doesn't disappear

In the game, the fly starts with 10 tasks at once and at 12:00 her limit drops to 2. She takes no new tasks, and only at 14:35 does she have 2 open again. Lowering the limit doesn't calm her right away.

Each urgent task cost one regular task

In the simulation, the fly gets urgent tasks that jump the limit. With a limit of 2, each urgent task per day costs her about one regular task. A limit of 2 is still the one where she finishes the most.

Studies with real people point in the same direction and none of them gives a number. Your team's number comes from its own test, and the four steps to run it are on page 2.

What studies with real people say

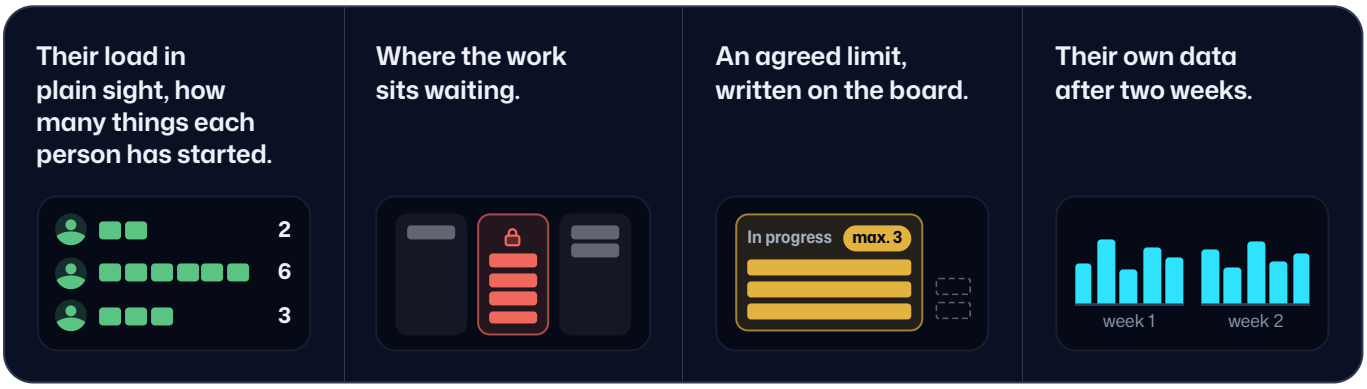
In Italy, judges who were assigned more cases at once by lottery took longer to close them, and the quality of their rulings didn't change (Coviello, Ichino and Persico, 2014). Recruiters finished more with a bit of parallel work, and past a point they finished less (Aral, Brynjolfsson and Van Alstyne, 2012). DORA's surveys of software teams say that WIP limits help, especially with a visible board. None of them measured how many things it's best to have open.

What comes from the game and what doesn't

The game is a single fly on a single day, with no coworkers to hand work to, and it doesn't measure people or teams. Little's law, which is math, says that, at the same output rate, each task takes longer when more are open. But that she finishes half as many with 9 depends on two rules of ours, the cost of switching tasks and the cigarettes, and that stress goes up is our assumption. Her brain is real, but it doesn't decide anything.

What your team takes away

It's what stays in plain sight after trying a limit for two weeks. Your team's own test will show how much it gains.



Four steps to try a limit with your team

The game doesn't tell you your team's number. These four steps help you find it.

1 Make the work visible

Three columns are enough (To do, In progress, Done). What you can't see, you can't limit.

2 Count what's open and set a limit

Count how many things each person has open today. Agree on a low limit, write it on the board and stick to it. If some waiting can't be avoided, make it more than one.

3 When someone is left waiting, go after the wait

Don't open something else to "make good use of the time." Help unblock what's waiting. With fewer waits, the limit can go down.

4 Try it for two weeks and measure

On each card, note the day it started and the day it finished. After two weeks, compare how many got finished, and how long each took, with the two weeks before.

A sustainable limit, not one thing at a time.

The game, the WIP limit guide, the report and the workshop kit are free at **mosca.deliverycraft.ai**. For now, the workshop is in Spanish.

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