

Eye Masks Help Improve Memory, According to Sleep Scientist

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. Pitch-dark (Adjective) /ˌpɪtʃ ˈdɑːrk/ with no light at all
Example: The basement was pitch-dark, so the security guard had to use a flashlight.
2. Alert (Adjective) /əˈlɜrt/ able to think quickly or clearly; quick to be aware of possible danger, harm, etc.
Example: Pulling over for a short nap will help you stay alert when driving at night.
3. Experiment (Noun) /ɪkˈspɛrəmənt/ a scientific procedure done to make a discovery, test an idea, or show that a fact is true
Example: The researchers conducted an experiment to study the effects of caffeine on memory.
4. Track (Verb) /træk/ to follow the progress, development or movement of something
Example: You can track your shipment using this link.
5. Measure (Verb) /ˈmeɪʒər/ to find the size, amount, speed, etc. of something
Example: The researchers used four different metrics to measure people's overall happiness.
6. Device (Noun) /dɪˈvaɪs/ a piece of electronic equipment, such as a smartphone or laptop; a tool or machine that has been made to do a particular job
Example: Please turn off all electronic devices before take-off.



Even as we get older, some of us don't like to sleep in total darkness. Others can only get a good rest when it's pitch-dark. These people can find it difficult to sleep when the sun rises early during the summer. Viviana Greco, a researcher from Cardiff University, is one of those people. When she moved to Wales from Italy, she found that her curtains weren't keeping her room dark, and she was waking up early in the summer. So, as a sleep scientist, she decided to do some research.

Working with a team from Europe and the US, she looked at how wearing an eye mask at night affected people's thinking the next day. And according to their study, wearing an eye mask at night may help us feel more alert, and might even improve our memory. They did two

experiments. In the first one, 89 people spent a week — in summer — wearing an eye mask at night.

After five days, the researchers did some tests to measure memory and how alert the participants were. They then spent a week sleeping without a mask and did the same tests. The results showed that people were more alert and had better memories after a week of sleep with the mask.

Thirty-three people took part in the second experiment. It was similar, but this time they wore a sleep tracking device. The device showed that people had better memories when they spent more time in deep sleep while wearing a mask — but, interestingly, not when they spent more time in deep sleep without a mask.

DISCUSSION

1. What are your thoughts on the findings of this study?
2. Do you find it surprising that sleeping with an eye mask may affect our memory?
3. Do you find it difficult to sleep in a room that's not completely dark?
4. Have you ever worn an eye mask to bed? If so, did it help you sleep in longer?
5. Do you usually wake up earlier in the summer?