# 5 Ways to Sleep Better for Greater Memory and Recall

The days of “cramming” are over. Science has now conclusively shown that sleep is *crucial* to memory and recall. Want to learn something well? Then you had better get your eight hours.

Here are five ways to do that and to boost your ability to store and retrieve information.

*Take Sleep Seriously*

The first and most important point is simply to start treating sleep with the respect it deserves. Don't go to bed late thinking you'll 'make up for it later'. Sleep will impact every aspect of the way you feel, look and perform and the negative effects can be cumulative with time. Make getting enough, high quality sleep a priority.

*Drink Less*

If you are drinking even a couple of glasses of wine or beer a night then this will be badly hurting the quality of your sleep. Alcohol leads to dehydration, it increases your heartrate and it prevents you from getting fully restorative deep sleep. If you aren't out socializing, pick a fruit juice instead.

Oh, and the same goes for caffeine past 4pm as well!

*Take a Hot Shower Before Bed*

This is one easy change that can have a huge impact on your sleep. A hot shower will stimulate the production of melatonin (the sleep hormone) in your body and thus help you to sleep like a baby. It also naturally relaxes the muscles.

*Avoid Screen Time*

For an hour before bed, avoid looking at computer screens or phones. Your brain registers this wavelength of light as sunlight because it's a similar point on the spectrum. Spend the last hour reading quietly and you'll reduce your cortisol and sleep much better as a result! Many unnatural lights can cause this problem too – in fact, just going to the bathroom in the night can trigger the release of enough cortisol to have quite profound negative effects on your sleep subsequently.

*Consider a Daylight Alarm*

While you want to avoid screen time during the evening though, this same 'blue light' is actually very beneficial when you're just waking up. That's because cortisol is one of the things that helps us wake up and it's a lack of this natural light that often makes it hard to get up in winter. Try getting a daylight alarm which works by simulating the effects of a sunrise first thing in the morning by producing light at just the right wavelengths and then getting gradually brighter.