

How Can We Help Witnesses to Remember More? It's an (Eyes) Open and Shut Case.

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Five experiments tested the idea that instructing a witness to close their eyes during retrieval might increase retrieval success. In Experiment 1 participants watched a video, before a cued-recall test for which they were either instructed to close their eyes, or received no-instructions. Eye-closure led to an increase in correct cued-recall, with no increase in incorrect responses. Experiments 2-5 sought to test the generality of this effect over variations in study material (video or live interaction), test format (cued- or free-recall) and information modality (visual or auditory details recalled). Overall, eye-closure increased recall of both visual detail and auditory details, with no accompanying increase in recall of false details. Collectively, these data convincingly demonstrate the benefits of eye-closure as an aid to retrieval, and offer insight into why hypnosis, which usually involves eye-closure, may facilitate eyewitness recall.

Law Hum Behav. 2007 Sep 25 Perfect TJ, Wagstaff GF, Moore D, Andrews B, Cleveland V, Newcombe S, Brisbane KA, Brown L. School of Psychology, University of Plymouth, Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL4 8AA, UK, tperfect@plymouth.ac.uk.
