

## Enzo's Experience – Falling Lights

Fall is here, and with it has come two things that I enjoy – falling leaves and falling temperatures (for the most part – we all know how Sacramento is).

But this season also brings something that I have never gotten used to: falling light levels in the morning. This has always bothered me, it drains all of my motivation to get up in the morning, makes the cold weather seem oppressive rather than pleasant, and just feels wrong. And I know for a fact that I am not the only one who feels this way, because these feelings, for the most part, are scientifically explained.

Light actually has a great impact on how your body responds to waking up and falling asleep. Sitting smack bang in the center of your brain is your pineal gland. The pineal gland is sometimes referred to as the third eye, as it is responsible for the processing of different levels of light information coming from the outside. It is part of our central processing unit, capable of reading this information, and controlling your body's circadian rhythm by releasing the hormone melatonin.

Melatonin, as I would expect you the reader to know, helps with sleep. But it is not capable of knocking you out, it simply lets the body know that is time for bed, helping with relaxation and slower breathing. With less light to kickstart our bodies wakeup protocol, mornings are spent in more of a tired stupor than any motivated habits of the past summer.

So what can you do? People have developed coping strategies for this phenomenon, me included. The most common I have seen is drinking coffee. Or tea, or other things with caffeine – go eat a ton of chocolate, I guess. Personally, I do not drink coffee; it ruins my appetite. Some people I know drink enough coffee to kill a horse. Go figure.

The thing that really works for me is drinking water. It should be the first thing you do after walking up in my experience, and it should be a lot of water as well. I would recommend half of your water bottle, whatever that may be. I have also heard of turning on bright lights in your room to fool your pineal gland.

That just makes me see spots, so I have eased away from it, just like coffee.

The final thing that is universally agreed upon is exercise. Moving your body in the morning can wake up the brain and muscles, as well as help with any stiffness in the joints and limbs from lying down all night. People swear by a short walk in the morning, just to clear the grogginess, but I know this is a big ask for any routine late risers.

In fact, all of these options seem easier said than done. Making time in the morning for a walk is no joke for anyone, especially for those of us who like to start homework at 8:30 or later (speaking from experience). The morning can be a battle to get through period, after a late night of homework.

But for the first time in my life, I really am going to address this and attempt to fix my schedule. And you, the reader, should too. Try and get things done earlier, go to bed by 9:00, and make time for that walk in the morning. It will probably change your life, and likely in a positive way.