Study Skills Tip for July:

**WHY STUDENTS NEED TO TURN OFF DEVICES AN HOUR BEFORE SLEEP**

Artificial light from electronic and other devices generally emit a blue light - it may not actually look blue, but that is the underlying light. Blue light, along with ultraviolet light is a type of non-visible light at a very short wavelength. You can see an image of the spectrum here: [http://www.bluelightexposed.com/#what-is-blue-light](http://www.bluelightexposed.com/#what-is-blue-light).

**What does blue light do to the human body?**

Non-visible light has a lot of energy and studies show that a lot of exposure to this type of light can do damage to your eyes and also impair your sleep cycle. During sleep lots of essential physical processes take place and it is also when learning from the day is consolidated in memory. So getting enough sleep is essential for students.

Blue light is naturally generated only during the day, from sunlight. When it gets dark, naturally occurring blue light ceases, signalling the body to produce melatonin, the hormone associated with sleep. Using artificial lighting and devices which emit a blue light at night confuses the body-clock (the body’s natural sleep-wake cycle) by stopping the body from producing melatonin. This can result in disrupted sleep patterns including difficulty in falling asleep and staying asleep and shortened sleep duration.

Those at greatest risk from night-time exposure to blue light are those with existing sleep disorders and adolescents who often experience delayed sleep patterns as a result of biological changes.

**What can I do to limit my exposure to blue light at night?**

Some suggestions include:

- Be exposed to sunlight during the day to assist in accurately setting your body clock.
- Stop using all electronic devices preferably at least 2 hours before bed.
- Turn off all artificial lighting 1-2 hours before bed.
- Get a red or orange reading lamp, which does not emit blue light.
- Use blue light blocking glasses at night.
- Install a program or app on your computer or device to change the type of light it emits. A variety of programs are available including F.lux, EasyEyez, Night Filter, Zzz iPhone filter, Bluelight and Twilight
- Invert the colours on your iPhone or iPad.
- Turn the brightness down on your device for a few hours before bed (not perfect, but better than nothing!).

You can learn more about how to optimise your performance as a student at [www.studyskillshandbook.com.au](http://www.studyskillshandbook.com.au)

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*HOD Humanities*