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**Less blinking may mean more active listening – 18th December 2025**

## **Level 0**

We all blink 15–20 times a minute. There are several reasons for this. One is so our eyes do not dry out. Another reason is to protect our eyes from dust. Scientists say they found a further reason. They say we blink less when we are listening to someone speak. Blinking less gives our brain more energy, so we can focus on listening.

The researchers did two experiments. In one, people listened to many sentences being read in a quiet room. In the other, there was background noise. The people in the room with background noise blinked a lot less. Another researcher explained that we blink less "when important information is coming".

## **Level 1**

We all blink 15–20 times a minute, without thinking. There are several reasons for this. One is so our eyes do not dry out. Another reason is to protect our eyes from dust. Scientists say they have found a further reason. Researchers in Canada say we blink less when we are listening to someone speak, especially when there is background noise. The lead researcher said blinking less gives our brain more energy, so we can focus on listening.

The researchers did two experiments on 49 people. The people listened to many sentences being read. In one experiment, there was no background noise. In the other, there was background noise. The people in the test with background noise blinked a lot less. Another researcher said we blink less "when important information is coming". The lead researcher agreed. She said: "We don't just blink randomly."

## **Level 2**

We all blink 15–20 times a minute, automatically, without thinking. There are several reasons why we blink. One is to stop our eyes from becoming dry. This helps us see. Another reason is to protect our eyes from dust and insect attacks. Scientists think they have found a further reason. Researchers from Concordia University in Canada found that we blink less when we are listening to someone speak. This happens more when there is background noise. The lead researcher said blinking less gives our brain more energy. This allows us to focus on what someone is saying.

The researchers carried out two experiments on 49 participants. The participants listened to sentences being read aloud. In one experiment, there was no background noise. In the other, there was background noise. The people in the test with background noise blinked a lot less. When the background noise increased, blink rates dropped even more. Another researcher said we blink less "when important information is coming". The lead researcher agreed. She said: "We don't just blink randomly. In fact, we blink...less when important information is presented."

## **Level 3**

Blinking is something we do automatically, without thinking. We blink 15–20 times a minute. There are several reasons why we blink. One is to stop our eyes from becoming dry. This helps our vision. Another reason is to protect our eyes from dust or sudden insect attacks. Scientists in Canada think they have found another function of blinking. The researchers are from Concordia University in Montreal. They found that we blink less when we are listening to someone speak. This happens more when there is background noise. Lead researcher Penelope Coupal said blinking less means our brain has a little more energy. This allows us to focus on what another person is saying.

The research team conducted two experiments on 49 participants. All of the test participants listened to sentences being read aloud. In one experiment, there was no background noise. In the other test, there was background noise, which made it harder for the people to hear the sentences. The scientists said that people in the test with background noise blinked a lot less. When the background noise increased, blink rates dropped even further. Study co-author Dr Mickael Deroche said we automatically blink less "when important information is coming". Ms Coupal agreed. She said: "We don't just blink randomly. In fact, we blink systematically less when important information is presented."