

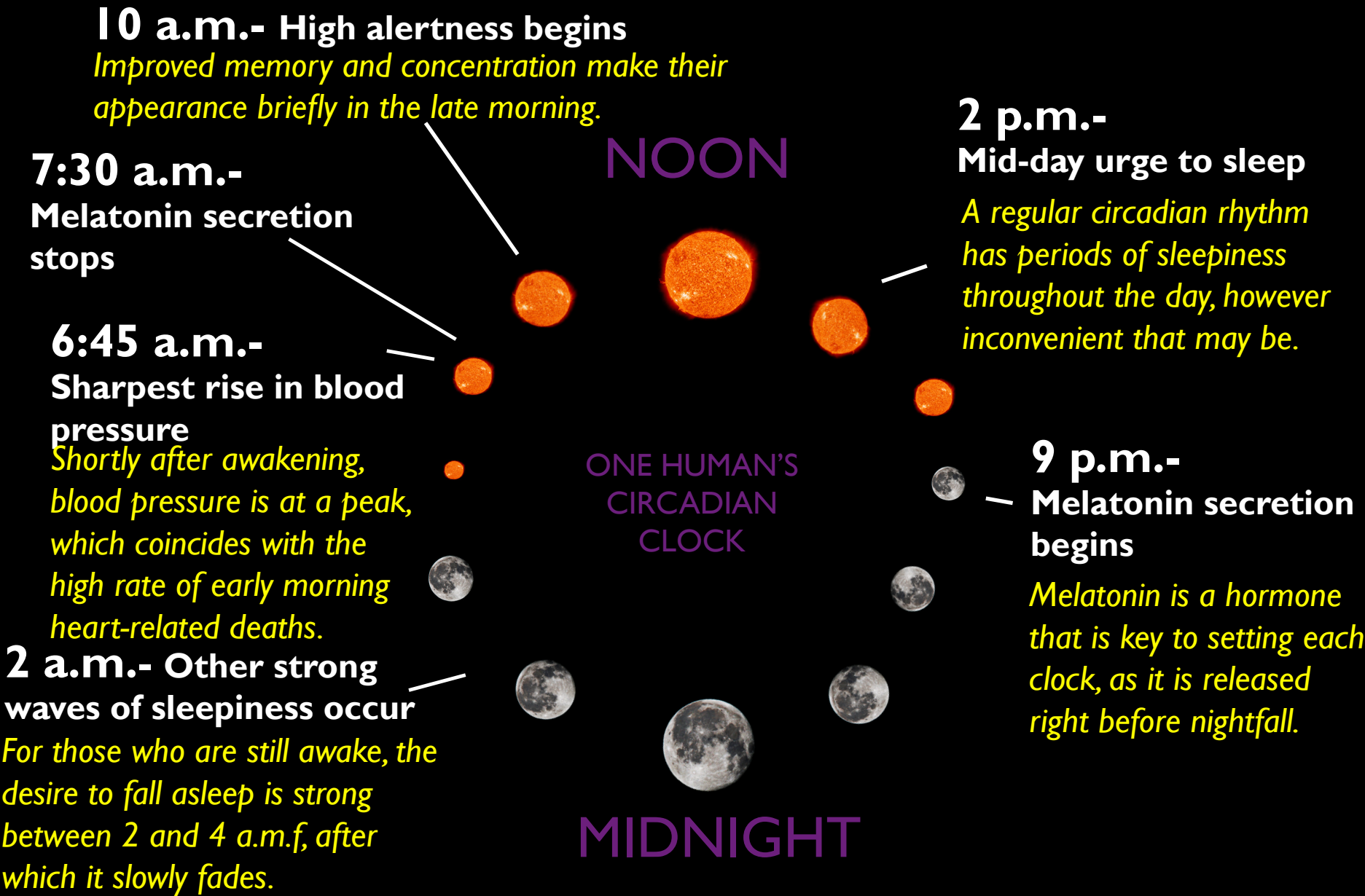
# CIRCADIAN RHYTHMS

Named from Latin roots “circa” (approximately) and “dies” (day), circadian rhythms are the daily cycles that drive behavior and physiological changes across species on Earth, including mammals, plants, and even bacteria.

By Nicole Lou

Each organism sets its own circadian rhythm, or clock, although each clock can be influenced by environmental cues such as daylight and temperature. That’s why humans, for example, follow varying rhythms according to their surroundings.

Here’s an approximation of an earthling’s inner schedule.



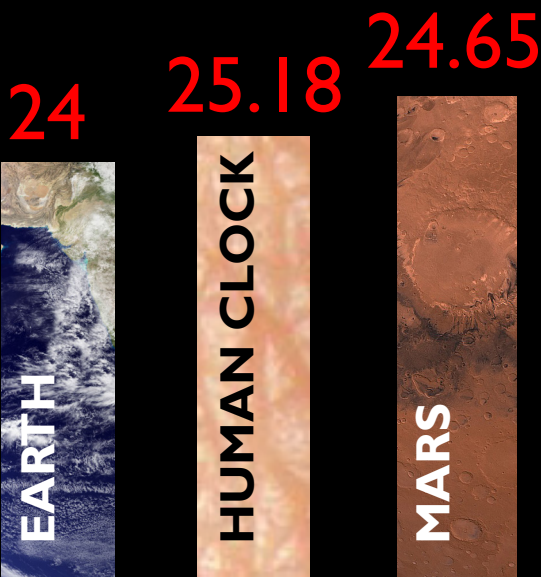
5,832

(On Venus, try 243 Earth days)

How many hours are there in a day?  
*Depends.*

The circadian clocks of most organisms are set around, but not exactly, 24 hours. Researchers believe the variation in rhythm may be a way to avoid competition in an ecological community.

A space traveler’s circadian rhythm would have to be reset to each planet, redefining what it means to live day by day. The internal orchestration of an organism’s biological processes would be stretched anywhere from a little (Mars) to a lot (Venus).



AVERAGE HOURS IN A DAY (not to scale)