Very Short Introductions online

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Circadian Rhythms: A Very Short Introduction
Russell Foster and Leon Kreitzman

The Earth’s daily rotation affects almost every living creature. From dawn through to dusk, there are changes in light, temperature, humidity, and rainfall. However, these changes are regular, rhythmic, and therefore predictable. Thus, the near 24-hour circadian rhythm is innate: a genetically programmed clock. Circadian Rhythms: A Very Short Introduction explains how organisms can ‘know’ the time and reveals what we now understand of the nature and operation of chronobiological processes. Covering variables such as light, the metabolism, human health, and the seasons, it illustrates how jet lag and shift work can impact on human well-being, and considers circadian rhythms alongside a wide range of disorders, from schizophrenia to obesity.

The Eye: A Very Short Introduction
Michael F. Land

The eye is one of the most remarkable achievements of evolution. In humans, vision is the most important sense, and much of the brain is given over to the processing of visual information. The Eye: A Very Short Introduction describes the evolution of vision and the variety of eyes found in both humans and animals. It explores the evolution of colour vision in primates and the workings of the human eye. It explains how we see in three dimensions and the basic principles of visual perception, including our impressive capacity for pattern recognition and the ability of vision to guide action.