

## **Power Naps Can Work Miracles**

Are you constantly tired and loathsome even after a long night's sleep? Do you take very long day naps as a way to re-energize yourself but still feel lethargic when you wake up? Well, why not try power naps. Power naps are short naps, usually no more than twenty to thirty minutes long. Research has shown that such short naps can do more good for the mind and body than coffee or naps two to three hours in length. In fact, having regular power naps can even boost your health and longevity.

Here's what sleep expert, Sara C. Mednick, PhD says about power naps: "Daytime naps can be one way to treat sleep deprivation." She said: "You reset the system and get a burst of alertness and increased motor performance. That's what most people really need to stave off sleepiness and get an energy boost." If you start taking daytime power naps, you will join these well-known people who were famous for their afternoon powers naps: Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, Napoleon, Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, and George W. Bush.

We can't be too busy to take power naps. "I'm too busy" is the excuse of most people who say they cannot do certain things in their lives. They are even too busy to take a power nap during the day. However, if they look at their productivity, they would still be lagging behind their goals. Today, we can change that. The article shares that twenty minutes power naps are "good for alertness and motor learning and performance without leaving you feeling groggy or interfering with nighttime sleep." Many people use coffee to give them a push. "But research tells us that caffeine, which is in coffee, can decrease memory performance. So you may feel more wired, but you are also prone to making more mistakes," say Dr. Mednick.

Research also tells us that humans are the only animals who most of them do not take naps during the waking hours (except for little children and the elderly). Another research indicates that "More than 85% of mammalian species are polyphasic sleepers, meaning that they sleep for short periods throughout the day." Humans, unfortunately, who should be wiser, are not doing so, and it is impacting our performance and health. "A study at NASA on sleepy military pilots and astronauts found that a 40-minute nap improved performance by 34% and alertness by 100%."

Online WebMD states how longer "power naps" can also benefit us. "Slow-wave sleep -- napping for approximately 30 to 60 minutes -- is good for decision-making skills, such as memorizing vocabulary or recalling directions. Getting rapid eye movement or REM sleep, usually 60 to 90 minutes of napping, plays a key role in making new connections in the brain and solving creative problems." Note though, if you can start now with 20 minutes of daily power napping, you will be doing yourself a great deal of good—beyond what you can imagine.

Many people who come home tired from work or school and decide to nap and often would sleep for hours and still arise tired. Then they wake up trying to do their homework or other chores or required assignments but cannot do it well. This happens because when you sleep more than the power nap time frame, you put your body and mind in a sleep mode that requires you to finish the sleep cycles. But instead, you have to interrupt it to do your tasks. Then you find that are you still tired and cannot really concentrate. Short power naps will

give you the same power or energy you are unrealistically expecting from those longer naps in the day. It sounds unreal, but it is true. Try it.

The next time you come home feeling tired and beaten from the day's activities and "cannot do a thing" but need to, take a power nap—just twenty minutes.

### **HOW DO YOU DO IT?**

How do you do power naps? First make sure you have an alarm clock or something or someone to wake you in twenty minutes. Second, make sure the environment is quiet, and conducive to sleep without interruptions. Ensure the room is airy and cool and smells fresh. For some it might be best not sleeping the regular sleep bed, but a comfortable place is imperative. Third, when you lie down, you must "go to sleep." Do not lay there expecting sleep to come to you. Tell yourself you will sleep. Concentrate on going to sleep. Lay in a comfortable position where you can relax your muscles. If it is difficult the first time you try it, start by focusing on breathing slowing with your eyes closed. If you need music to assist your napping, make sure it is soft, easy-listening, relaxing music that will not stimulate you to keep awake. If you live in Nassau, turning to Cable Channel 27 or Classical 98.1 FM on the radio dial might to wonders. Make sure the room is dark or use eye masks. Also make it a daily routine to nap. "Research has found that napping regularly may reduce stress and even decrease your risk of heart disease."

Months ago I asked a teenage client to start doing power naps. He was amazed how it energized. He said he had more time to do his assignments and he was much more alert. He was so excited about how he felt that he said he will recommend that his school have required power naps every day for high school students. Smart boy!

Start your power nap today.

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