



Why You Need to Take a Nap at Work

Studies Suggest That Napping During the Day Can Increase Productivity and Have Health Benefits

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Could napping at work actually increase productivity?

According to a new book by Dr. Sara C. Mednick called "Take a Nap! Change Your Life," the answer is yes.

A NASA study backs up the claim. The study shows that a nap of just 26 minutes can boost performance by as much as 34 percent.

The average American gets 6.7 hours sleep a night; the recommended amount is eight hours a night.

Mednick said she grew interested in researching the benefits of napping because as a student, she took a lot of naps.

"I found it helps with memory processing, alertness, and learning new skills," she said. "We live with less than our recommended eight hours, and that means so many things -- decreased sex drive, decreased productivity, and fatigue-related accidents. Napping helps with all of these things."

Some companies are starting to respond to sleep-deprived workers by providing the time and space to nap during work hours. Studies show tired workers cost business about \$150 billion a year in lost productivity.

"I think it's just like working from home," Mednick said. "Years ago your boss would have thought you were crazy if you asked to work from home, but now that companies see the results and increase in productivity, it's become more and more common. I think once companies start to see an increase in production and fewer sick days from napping, it will become more and more common as well."

Napping Tips

Here are some of Mednick's tips and tidbits on making the most of your nap times:

Prime nap time is 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. That minidip in energy you experience is biological, not because you just ate lunch, Mednick said.

Stage 2 Sleep. There are different phases of sleep. Within 20 minutes, you experience "Stage 2" sleep, which increases alertness and motor skills.

Slow Wave Sleep. Within 40 minutes, you'll experience slow wave sleep, which increases memory.

REM Sleep. This is deep sleep you'll get if you nap for up to 90 minutes, and it increases creativity.

Low light and low noise will help you fall asleep faster.

Studies show that naps up to 90 minutes won't interfere with your sleep at night, so don't sleep too long. And don't nap within three hours of bedtime.

Famous nappers include Lance Armstrong, Bill Clinton and Albert Einstein.

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