

DEVELOP TOGETHER

"Helping You Make Positive and Long Lasting Changes to Your Life."

How To Take the Perfect Nap

There are several reasons for needing take a nap during the day. Babies and toddlers use up a lot of mental and physical energy during the day as they're developing so fast, so napping helps recover from this and embeds the learning into the brain. In our late middle age, perhaps over 50, we tend to tire more easily, so napping helps us get through the day at the pace we worked at when younger. If we're not getting enough sleep at night and on a regular basis due to a busy schedule or work and play, then we may not always have the energy for this and need a nap to stay on top top form.

In order to take a great nap, we need to first understand the basics of sleep. There are four stages to the sleeping process, the first three stages are known together as non-REM sleep where no dreaming is taking place. Stage one is where our eyes are heavy and we're still half awake and aware of our surroundings but aren't that bothered with interacting with it. This doesn't really feel like sleep and lasts for up to 10 minutes before we move into stage two which is where we become disconnected from our surroundings and any sounds we hear aren't associated with reality. We go in and out of this stage throughout a full night's sleep and spend most of our time here.

The third stage of sleep is even deeper than the stage two and lasts for longer periods. During this time we are completely cut off from any real world interruptions. Finally we have stage four which is known as REM sleep, otherwise known as Rapid Eye Movement. This is the stage of sleep when we're dreaming.

It's the first two stages that are best for napping as if too long is spent in stage two and we enter stage three or four then waking up will result in what is known as sleep inertia. Essentially this is when we feel groggy and not able to operate to our full capacity.

In order to take the perfect nap we need to limit the time we spend in stage two, particularly if we're trying to have what is known as a Power Nap. With this type of nap we need to limit our time, by using an alarm, to about 20 minutes. Any longer and we'll suffer from sleep inertia and the grogginess that goes along with this for up to 30 minutes after waking. The best times for a Power Nap is straight after lunch when our bodies are spending energy to process our food intake, or early evening before our evening meal. If we don't need a Power Nap and have the time to take longer naps, then we should allow at least half an hour to recover from the grogginess. This isn't always noticeable through physical symptoms but affects how well our brains can process information. Longer nappers should be mindful of the time of day they do this as it can affect our ability to fall asleep at night. These naps should be limited to 90 minutes with a 30 minutes recovery time.

If you have any questions about this, please email info@developtogether.co.uk.

Kind Regards,

Rob

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