

Napping Can Dramatically Increase Learning, Memory, Awareness, And More

HEALTH

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Many Europeans believe in the benefits of napping so much that they shut down in the afternoon to allow everyone to take a quick power nap, recharge, and come back to work. Unfortunately, this isn't the case in the U.S. where a mid-day nap is not only a luxury, but often times is perceived as downright laziness.

If you're among those who enjoy the occasional midday snooze, you should continue the habit as studies have shown that it's a normal and integral part of the circadian (sleep-wake cycle) rhythm.

Studies have shown that short naps can improve awareness and productivity. You don't need much; just 15 to 20 minutes can make a world of difference.

According to a study from the University of Colorado Boulder discovered that children who didn't take their afternoon nap didn't display much joy and interest, had a higher level of anxiety, and lower problem solving skills compared to other children who napped regularly. The same goes for adults as well. Researchers with Berkeley found that adults who regularly take advantage of an afternoon nap have a better learning ability and improved memory function. Why is napping so essential? Because it gives your brain a reboot, where the short-term memory is cleared out and our brain becomes refreshed with new defragged space.

How long should you nap?

According to experts, 10 to 20 minutes is quite enough to refresh your mind and increase your energy and alertness. The sleep isn't as deep as longer naps and you're able to get right back at your day immediately after waking up. If you nap for 30 minutes you may deal with a 30-minute grogginess period because you wake up just as your body started entering a deeper stage of sleep. The same can be said if you sleep for an hour, but on the other hand, these 60-minute naps provide an excellent memory boost. The longest naps—lasting about 90 minutes—are recommended for those people who just don't get enough sleep at night. Since it's a complete sleep cycle, it can improve emotional memory and creativity.

There you have it – naps are good for you physical and mental well being so you should practice them as much as you can. However, be advised that you shouldn't sacrifice nighttime sleeping for an afternoon nap, they should be an addition to a good night sleep.

Source: <http://www.thinkinghumanity.com>