


- Sleep / Job satisfaction

SHOULD WE ALL BE NAPPING ON THE JOB? THERE ARE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF A WORK SIESTA, ACCORDING TO STUDIES

Muscat Daily · 11 Feb 2025 · 16 · Courtesy: euronews.com

Napping during the day is a cultural norm in some parts of the world, but could it transform your work day? Experts are debating the potential benefits. They snooze in parking garages, on side streets before the afternoon school run, in nap pods rented by the hour, or stretched out in bed while working from home. But are people who nap during the day or on the job getting any health benefits?



WEEKEND NAPS

A recent study found that people who slept extra hours on weekends were up to 20 per cent less likely to develop heart disease compared to those who didn't.

Adding up an extra hour of sleep during the weekend might be more beneficial than it seems.

A large new study revealed that sleeping in on weekends may help mitigate risk associated with sleep deprivation.

The new findings, which were presented at a meeting of the European Society of Cardiology, showed that people who got extra sleep lowered their risk of heart disease by up to 20 per cent.

When to take a nap
Mid-afternoon is the ideal time for a nap because it coincides with the natural circadian dip, which happens after 6 pm

and doctors who work at nearby hospitals.

Naps that also provide relief from essential workers such as police officers, firefighters and emergency medical service personnel.

"In this society, you really only have two places to sleep - you have your bed at home and you have a hotel room you can probably get for 100 bucks." Wong said. "There's really no third space that's quiet, that provides some privacy where you can also rest."

and doctors who work at nearby hospitals.

Naps that also provide relief from essential workers such as police officers, firefighters and emergency medical service personnel.

"In this society, you really only have two places to sleep - you have your bed at home and you have a hotel room you can probably get for 100 bucks." Wong said. "There's really no third space that's quiet, that provides some privacy where you can also rest."



Several research studies have found there are benefits from napping, such as enhanced memory and focus.

A mid-afternoon siesta is the norm in parts of Spain and Italy, while in China and Japan, napping is encouraged since working to the point of exhaustion is seen as a display of dedication, according to a recent study in the journal Sleep.

Here are some tips about napping during the day and potentially reaping its benefits:

Keep naps short

Sleep is as important to good health as diet and exercise, but too many people don't get enough of it, according to James Rowley, programme director of the Sleep Medicine Fellowship at Rush University Medical Center.

"A lot of it has to do with electronics. It used to be TVs, but now cell phones are probably the biggest culprit. People just take them to bed with them and watch," Rowley said. For instance, a 2021 study found that young adults who used their phones before sleeping were more likely to report trouble sleeping. The key to effective napping is to keep the snooze sessions short, Rowley said, adding that short naps can be restorative and are more likely to leave you more alert.

"Most people don't realise naps should be in the 15- to 20-minute range," Rowley said. "Anything longer, and you can have problems with sleep inertia, difficulty waking up, and you're groggy". Individuals who find themselves consistently relying on naps to make up for inadequate sleep should probably also examine their bedtime habits, he said.

When to take a nap

Mid-afternoon is the ideal time for a nap because it coincides with a natural circadian dip, while napping after 6 pm may interfere with nocturnal sleep for those who work during daylight hours, said Michael Chee, director of the Centre for Sleep and Cognition at the National University of Singapore.

When people nap for too long, it may not be a sustainable practice, and also, really long naps that cross the two-hour mark affect nighttime sleep.

"Any duration of nap, you will feel recharged. It's a relief valve. There are clear cognitive benefits," Chee said.

A review of napping studies suggests that 30 minutes is the optimal nap length in terms of practicality and benefits, said Ruth Leong, a research fellow at the Singapore centre.

"When people nap for too long, it may not be a sustainable practice, and also, really long naps that cross the two-hour mark affect nighttime sleep," Leong said.

Experts recommend setting an alarm for 20 to 30 minutes, which gives nappers a few minutes to fall asleep. But some say even a short nap can be restorative.

Creating space for sleep

Naps are accepted and even a necessity in some occupations.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourages naps for nurses who work night shifts. But many nurses can't sleep at the hospitals where they work because they're too busy and aren't given access to beds.

Nurses "regularly struggle to have sufficient time to use the bathroom or go outside for fresh air, no less take a nap," said a spokesperson for the National Nurses United union.

Some companies are trying to fill the void. Inspired by his mother who worked as a nurse, Neil Wong founded Nap York, which offers sleeping pods in Manhattan and Queens that can be rented for about US\$27 an hour.

His regular customers include super-commuters, UPS drivers, a security guard who works two full-time jobs, and doctors who work at nearby hospitals.

Nap York also gives half-off prices to essential workers such as police officers, firefighters and emergency medical service personnel.

"In this society, you really only have two places to sleep - you have your bed at home and you have a hotel room you can probably get for 100 bucks," Wong said. "There's really no third space that's quiet, that provides some privacy, where you can also rest."