



Napping Do's and Don'ts for Adults

If you're sleep deprived or just looking for a way to relax, you might be thinking about taking a nap. Napping at the wrong time of day or for too long can backfire, though. Understand how to get the most out of a nap.

What are the benefits of napping? Napping offers various benefits for healthy adults, including:

- Relaxation
- Reduced fatigue
- Increased alertness
- Improved mood
- Improved performance, including quicker reaction time and better memory

What are the drawbacks to napping?

Napping isn't for everyone. Some people simply can't sleep during the day or have trouble sleeping in places other than their own beds, which napping sometimes requires. Napping can also have negative effects, such as:

- **Sleep inertia.** You might feel groggy and disoriented after waking up from a nap.
- **Nighttime sleep problems.** Short naps generally don't affect nighttime sleep quality for most people. However, if you experience insomnia or poor sleep quality at night, napping might worsen these problems. Long or frequent naps might interfere with nighttime sleep.

When should I consider a nap? You might consider making time for a nap if you:

- Experience new fatigue or unexpected sleepiness
- Are about to experience sleep loss, for example, due to a long work shift
- Want to make planned naps part of your daily routine

What's the best way to take a nap? To get the most out of a nap, follow these tips:

- **Keep naps short.** Aim to nap for only 10 to 30 minutes. The longer you nap, the more likely you are to feel groggy afterward.
- **Take naps in the afternoon.** The best time for a nap is usually midafternoon, around 2 or 3 p.m. This is the time of day when you might experience post-lunch sleepiness or a lower level of alertness. In addition, naps taken during this time are less likely to interfere with nighttime sleep. Keep in mind, however, that individual factors — such as your need for sleep and your sleeping schedule — also can play a role in determining the best time of day to nap.
- **Create a restful environment.** Nap in a quiet, dark place with a comfortable room temperature and few distractions.

After napping, be sure to give yourself time to wake up before resuming activities — particularly those that require a quick or sharp response.

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