

# Power Nap

Napping is a popular way to relieve tiredness and feel more alert. Although napping for too long can leave people feeling dazed or groggy, a well-timed power nap can effectively relieve fatigue and increase focus for up to several hours.

Tiredness from insufficient or poor sleep can affect health, safety, and the ability to function in general. A power nap can be a powerful tool for anyone who experiences sleep deprivation, including people working the night shift, travelers who cross time zones, students, and anyone who has trouble getting enough sleep.

## What Is a Power Nap?

A power nap is a planned short period of sleep that can relieve tiredness and help a person feel alert again. For a power nap to be effective, it needs to be timed so that a person wakes up when they are in the early and lighter stages of sleep as our comprehensive **Better Sleep**.

## How Long Should a Power Nap Be?

Research shows that 10- to 30-minute power naps are refreshing and can make a person feel more awake. In particular, napping for less than 20 minutes.

The National Center for Biotechnology Information advances science and health by providing access to biomedical and genomic information. Improves alertness and functioning right away with little or no grogginess after waking up. Power naps are unlikely to **interfere with nighttime sleep** if taken in the early or mid-afternoon.

A longer power nap can be helpful if timed so that a person wakes up at the end of a **sleep cycle**, which lasts about 90 minutes. Sleep is lighter at the end of a sleep cycle, which means a 90-minute nap should only cause a brief period of sluggishness from sleep inertia.

## Power Nap Benefits

Power naps are associated with a plethora of benefits, including:

- Reduced fatigue
- Increased alertness and attention
- Improved performance and safety for shift workers
- Better memory
- Decreased reaction time

## How to Take a Power Nap

To take a power nap, set aside 15 to 30 minutes and set an alarm on your watch or phone to make sure you do not oversleep. Before taking a power nap, some people consume caffeine to set the stage for a **coffee nap**. Otherwise, prepare your environment for uninterrupted and restorative sleep:

- Make sure the room is cool
- Put electronic devices on silent mode and turn off notifications
- Lie down on a bed, mattress, or cot
- Use an eye mask or blackout shades
- Turn off or cover up the light coming from a device such as a clock or a computer
- Put in earplugs

After a power nap, it can help to get outside in the sunshine, expose yourself to bright light, or splash water on your face if you feel any residual grogginess.

A cup of caffeinated coffee can also help get rid of sleep inertia, but avoid caffeine within eight hours of bedtime

## References

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# Power Naps: Surprising Health Benefits and How to Take Them

Updated on August 28, 2024

Power naps are short naps that last 30 minutes or less. Napping has many benefits, such as improved performance at work, better brain function, and mood benefits.<sup>1</sup> However, not all naps are created equally.

A power nap differs from a regular nap in that you do not complete an entire sleep cycle with a power nap vs. a longer nap. With a power nap, you are less likely to experience sleep issues at night.

## How Long Is a Power Nap?

Power naps are short—between 10 and 30 minutes. Research shows that the ideal length for a power nap is 26 minutes. This duration decreases the risk of drawbacks such as post-nap drowsiness and increases benefits such as alertness and productivity.<sup>2</sup>

Short naps give you enough rest to increase energy and brain function but not enough time to complete a full [sleep cycle](#). While a 30-minute power nap won't make up for a lot of [sleep debt](#) (the amount of sleep lost from poor sleep), it is less likely to interfere with your ability to fall asleep and get quality sleep at night.

# Health Benefits of Power Naps

There are many reasons to try power napping, as it's associated with various [benefits](#), including:<sup>3</sup>

Better memory function, Decreased fatigue, Decreased reaction time, Fewer accidents, Improved attention, Improved heart health, Improved mood, Increased alertness, Increased safety, Lower stress and anxiety levels, Optimized performance

## Are Power Naps Right for You?

Despite their positives, power naps are not suitable for everyone. Research shows that [napping](#) can decrease sleep quality at night. If any of the following apply to you, power naps might not be the answer to your [fatigue](#):<sup>4</sup>

**Insomnia:** Power naps may increase the severity of [insomnia](#) as it can make it more difficult to fall asleep at night or stay asleep in people with this problem.

**Sleep apnea:** Power naps are not a cure for sleep disorders such as [sleep apnea](#). While they can help increase energy and performance, getting quality sleep and addressing the underlying condition is still important.

Determining an ideal sleep schedule is different for everyone. If you struggle with sleep, consider talking to a healthcare provider. A [sleep specialist](#) or psychologist will ask about your lifestyle, day-to-day responsibilities, and overall health to determine if power naps could benefit you or if something more serious is contributing to your sleep challenges.

## How to Take a Power Nap

Learning to power nap can take practice, especially if you don't typically nap during the day.

Steps to power napping include:<sup>5</sup>

Find a time for a short nap, such as a break at work.

Silence your phone notifications and ask others not to disturb you while you nap.

Lie down in a comfortable place.

Set an alarm for the amount of nap time plus the time it takes to fall asleep (for example, 26 minutes of power nap plus five minutes to fall asleep equals 31 minutes for the alarm).

Use earplugs or a sound machine to limit noise.

Turn out the lights, close curtains or shades, and use an eye mask to block light.

Do a pre-sleep relaxation exercise to reduce [stress](#) and calm your thoughts, and prepare for sleep.

Stay consistent and nap at the same time each day.

## Set an Alarm

Experts recommend [setting an alarm](#) for 15 or 30 minutes when taking a power nap to prevent long naps and train the body and mind for shorter naps during the day.<sup>1</sup>

Before you set an alarm, consider how long it typically takes you to fall asleep and add that amount of time to your target nap duration. For example, if it typically takes 10 minutes to relax and fall asleep, add 10 extra minutes to your alarm so your nap does not end too soon after you fall asleep.

## Nap Early

Midday naps are best for optimizing benefits such as [executive function](#) (e.g., attention, focus, memory, etc.) without interfering with nightly sleep.<sup>6</sup>

Napping too close to bedtime—even taking short power naps—can be refreshing enough to make it more difficult to fall asleep at night. It is OK to take power naps in the morning if you're tired, but most people are not ready to fall asleep until midday or early afternoon.

"Early" naps may mean something different to people with alternate sleep schedules, such as those working the [night shift](#). However, the same idea

applies: Taking power naps earlier and not too close to the primary stretch of sleep is important.

## Create a Calm Sleep Environment

Preparing the environment for sleep is crucial, especially when creating a new power napping routine. Having a routine cues your brain that it is time to nap, making it easier to fall asleep quickly.

Since power naps typically take place during the day, using products such as earplugs and an eye mask can help eliminate outside distractions, make it easier to fall asleep and prevent being awakened by something other than your alarm.<sup>1</sup>

## Summary

Power naps are between 10 and 30 minutes, taken during the day, for a boost of energy. They can help improve performance, mood, and safety, among other things. Since they are too short to complete a full sleep cycle, power naps are less likely than longer naps to interfere with nighttime sleep.

It is best to nap midday and not too close to bedtime. Power naps are not for everyone and do not cure sleep disorders. Contact a healthcare provider if you suspect a sleep disorder.