Inadequate sleep can have a major impact on personal health, safety, mood and work performance. Unfortunately, research indicates that many people in the United States do not get sufficient sleep each night. In fact, over the past 25 years more full-time workers have been getting less sleep.

Sleeping for six to seven hours rather than the recommended eight hours for adults, which tends to be the norm for many, can initiate a spiral toward fatigue and sleepiness. Napping can be one way of recovering a bit of the sleep debt that many people live with every day.

Research has found that taking a nap during the day may be a helpful step in maintaining energy and productivity throughout the day.
Benefits of napping

A variety of benefits are associated with napping. Napping can promote consolidation of memories and facilitate learning. Naps may help reduce fatigue and related safety hazards associated with sleep deprivation. Napping during the middle of the afternoon, when a natural energy slump may occur, supports good work and focus for the rest of the day.

Other suggestions to facilitate good sleep include: having regular sleep and wake times, regular relaxation practice, establishing a quiet environment to facilitate entry into sleep as well as sleep maintenance, and short naps.

Short naps are usually defined as 10 to 20 minutes. Taking a nap during the day, or right before a night shift, has been found to be helpful in maintaining energy and reducing fatigue.

Recognizing the benefits, some corporations have incorporated naps as a workplace option, including: Nike (quiet rooms), Progressive Insurance (quiet rooms), Google (napping pods), Yelo (napping spa), and Deloitte & Touche (nap room).

If a quiet space is not available at work, additional ways to energize include: social interaction, physical activity, caffeine, light therapy, avoidance of successive night shifts, and regular sleep and wake times. Another option may be to rest for a brief period of time in your office or car.

Disadvantages of napping

Sleeping too long during a nap may lead to feeling overly tired later in the day. This is due to the sleep cycles that occur during a longer nap.

In addition, napping for a longer time make it harder to fall asleep at night. If a person is up for most of the night and then opts to take a nap the next day, they will likely feel significant grogginess. Again, this is due to sleep cycles. It would be more helpful in that setting, to take a short nap. Finally, there is a strong social stigma associated with napping.

In the United States, it may be associated with not working hard enough. As we learn more about the real benefits of taking care of ourselves, these ideas are starting to change.

Getting enough sleep on a regular basis is important for best daily performance. On days when you have not been getting enough night time rest, consider napping as an antidote to fatigue.
Significant positive results are associated with napping. You should find that you feel better both mentally and physically after your nap.

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