



p-TIPS

Perchance to dream? (Power napping for improved productivity)

Are you and everyone you know tired most of the time? The results of a US National Sleep Foundation survey released in March 2005 contained some frightening statistics: 60% of adults admitted driving while drowsy over the preceding year and almost one-third said that they had made mistakes at work due to sleepiness in the preceding three months. While on-the-job accidents, such as by hospital workers or airline pilots, are serious consequences of a lack of sleep, individual productivity slumps during the workday can cost employers too. Productivity consultants have recently decided that something old is new again: the siesta. Now referred to as "power napping," the Web site http://stress.about.com/od/sleep_disorders/a/powernap_2.htm summarizes how to go about it.

- 1) Explain your intentions to your supervisor and coworkers. Ensure that, if taken outside the lunch hour or scheduled breaks, the nap time is made up. (Somewhat surprisingly, the Japanese tend to accept naps more readily than other nationalities.)
- 2) Try to set aside approximately the same period for a daily power nap. Early birds may find the best time is an hour or so after lunch; night owls may

gain the most benefit from a nap around 4:00 PM.

- 3) Limit your nap to 20 to 30 minutes at most. Any longer may make you groggy and tired and/or upset your nighttime sleep cycle.
- 4) Always use an alarm clock or timer device to ensure that you wake on time. This may make it easier to fall asleep since there are no worries about over-sleeping.
- 5) Find a congenial spot. Those with a private office can simply shut the door and unplug the phone. Others must exercise more ingenuity. Seek out quiet spots in a company lounge, library, public park, or even parking lot. Those who drive to work may resort to their cars; even low-traffic restrooms are a possibility.
- 6) If you can't fall asleep, don't worry. Relaxing with closed eyes while breathing deeply should be the goal of the first few power-napping sessions. This alone can ensure that personal productivity remains high.