

Three Power Nap Routines

Contributed by Steve Gillman
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More precisely, there is a right length and a wrong length. If you sleep for longer than twenty to thirty minutes your body gets too deep into the sleep cycle, and you may feel even more groggy than before, the tiredness can last for an hour or more afterwards. So keep those naps short enough. As long as you do that, you can try any one of the following three routines.

1. The Basic Power Nap

{bot_wrgoogle}If you fall asleep easily, you can simply find a quiet place to lay down and close your eyes. If you are particularly skilled at falling asleep anywhere and anytime, you might just lean back in your chair at work. If you find that you don't wake back up within twenty-five minutes or so, you may need an alarm (the ones on watches are great for this).

2. The Coffee Nap

This is one I heard about from a sleep researcher at a major university. You drink a cup of coffee just before closing your eyes. Then you sleep for the usual fifteen or twenty minutes. The idea is that the caffeine from the coffee will hit your system just about the time you wake up. That means you get the benefit of the nap and a fast recovery from any residual grogginess. I only recommend trying this if you are already a coffee drinker though.

3. Brainwave Entrainment Power Nap

You may have heard of "brainwave entrainment" or "binaural beats." It's a technology that's almost forty years old now, based on early research into states of consciousness and electrical patterns in the brain. Now it has become common in audio products for meditation. Beats or sounds are embedded in a certain way in a background of music or other sounds (rain or waves are common). The result, when listened to with headphones, is an altering of one's brainwave pattern. More specifically, the usual beta brainwaves (above 14 hertz, or cycles per second) are slowed to the alpha range (8 to 14 hertz) or the theta range (4 to 8 hertz).

This causes a meditative state just by listening. That's the usual intent, and these products are great for those who want to meditate deeply without months of practice. However, they are also great for taking a power nap. After all, some people can't fall asleep at will on their own, but most people can be knocked out easily with a good brainwave entrainment CD.

Find one that is thirty minutes long or shorter. I've used one that is just ten minutes, and even that was long enough (and powerful enough) to put me to sleep. Generally you need to use headphones for these to be effective. One last suggestion: Combine the second and third power nap routines and you can get deep rest followed by a burst of mental energy.

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