



## NAPPING DOES A BODY GOOD

by Kaitlin Enneking

Feeling groggy at work, overly stressed, or less creative than usual? Take a nap! Eighty-five percent of mammals sleep in short spurts and as humans, we are in the minority when it comes to our sleeping pattern of only snoozing once a day. Give yourself a break, lie back, shut your eyes, and enjoy a nice nap. Need more reasons why napping will do your body good? Here are a few benefits:

- Naps restore alertness, enhance performance, and reduce mistakes and accidents. A NASA study found that a 40-minute nap improved performance by 34% and alertness by 100%.
- Enhanced alertness lasts for several hours after your nap,

providing a pick-me-up more effective than caffeine.

- Napping can boost your mood. Naps are an easy way to shut your mind and body down for a bit of rejuvenation.
- You'll be following in the footsteps of Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, Albert Einstein, and Thomas Edison. They were all great minds who were known as nappers.

What's the best way to take a nap?

- Keep naps short, 10 – 30 minutes is ideal.
- Take naps in the afternoon.
- Make them part of your routine, this way they are less likely to interfere with your nighttime sleep routine. ☒

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Understanding Circadian Rhythms
- 3 3 Commonly Used Sleep Aids
- 4 Harvest of the Month: Blueberries

## SMART FACTS

**10 HOURS**

The length of increased alertness following a 60-minute nap.

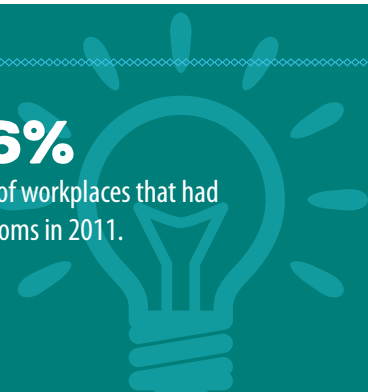
**3 PER WEEK**

Amount of naps shown to decrease coronary heart disease by 37% (in a study of 24,000 Greeks).

**6%**

The percentage of workplaces that had nap rooms in 2011.

Sources: Mayo Clinic. [mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/adult-health/in-depth/napping/art-20048319?pg=2](http://mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/adult-health/in-depth/napping/art-20048319?pg=2). Accessed 15 February 2015.  
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# UNDERSTANDING CIRCADIAN RHYTHMS

by Mechelle Meadows

Circadian rhythms are defined as the physical, mental, and behavioral fluctuations that happen in our bodies over a 24-hour period, mainly in response to light and darkness. These rhythms affect our ability to sleep or be alert, and they help regulate things such as hormones, cell regeneration, and body temperature. Circadian rhythms are ultimately governed by our biological clocks.

Circadian rhythms do not just influence being awake during the day and asleep at night; they are also responsible for dips and rises of energy throughout the daylight hours. You've probably experienced the slump around 3pm—you've eaten lunch, used energy to tackle tasks early in the day, and then your alertness begins to decline. It is scientifically proven that the lowest points in our energy and alertness levels happen at two times throughout a 24-hour period: from 2am to 4am, and from 1pm to 3pm. Circadian rhythms can also play a role in whether you're an early birds or a night owl. Studies show that, generally speaking, children are early birds. Then as they become teenagers and require more sleep, they become night owls. Later in life, people tend to shift back to being early birds and require less sleep to function at their same level.

Circadian rhythms play a role in whether you're an early bird or a night owl.

Since circadian rhythms are so ingrained within our bodies, it can take several days to adjust to any disruptions. Jet lag is a prime example: when you travel into a different time zone, especially one that is several hours off of your normal routine, you can feel groggy throughout the day or have trouble sleeping at night. Your body will slowly adjust, and after a few days spent in the new time zone, you will have acclimated to a different pattern of sleep and wakefulness.

Shift work is another common cause of a circadian rhythm disorder. Working an overnight shift is contrary to the body's desire to be awake when it is light outside and asleep when it's dark, so people with this work schedule can have problems getting enough sleep and being alert at work. Likewise, someone who constantly switches between day and night shifts can have even more difficulty adjusting and keeping a high enough balance in his or her energy "bank." Other factors such as pregnancy, certain medications, or diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's can contribute to circadian rhythm disorders. Treating circadian rhythm disorders can sometimes require medication while in other cases, methods such as light therapy or behavioral techniques are used to correct the problem. ♪

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WebMD. [webmd.com/sleep-disorders/default.htm](https://webmd.com/sleep-disorders/default.htm). Accessed 16 February 2015.  
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# 3 COMMONLY USED SLEEP AIDS

by Kelly Thomson, MSHP

There are many tips you can try if you are having trouble falling or staying asleep: exercise daily, stick with the same sleep routine, avoid alcohol or heavy meals in the evening, etc. If these tricks do not help you get the sleep you need, there are some sleep aids that can assist:

- **Chamomile:** This is typically sold in the form of tea or topical ointment and is widely available. It is considered safe with typically no side effects, although should be avoided if you are pregnant or nursing.
- **Melatonin:** You can find melatonin supplements in most drugstores. Its effects are usually mild, but it may help you fall asleep faster or recover from jet lag. Side effects can include headache and daytime sleepiness.
- **Valerian:** This supplement may help you fall asleep faster or simply improve your quality of sleep. It's meant to be used short term (4-6 weeks) and can cause a headache or upset stomach.

Before you begin using an over-the-counter sleep aid, seek your doctor's advice. Since sleep aids are not meant to be a

## FINANCIAL CORNER WITH PETE THE PLANNER

Having trouble sleeping? Sure, maybe it's because your mattress is lumpy or you have a newborn, but it could also be financial stress. How many times have you gone to lay your head down only for your money problems to start racing through your thoughts? No one can sleep with that sort of mental assault. There are a couple of solutions. The first is ACTION; it's the only proven way to lessen financial anxiety. Stressed about saving for college? Commit to making a small contribution each month. Stressed about making ends meet? Get a second job. Secondly, you can choose to only deal with your finances once a month. I call it the Financial Fifth. On the 5th of each month you assess last month and set goals for the upcoming month. What's there to worry about throughout the month if you've dealt with everything on the fifth? Sweet dreams! ☺

long-term solution, he or she will likely attempt to find the underlying problem with your sleeping patterns or give you advice on what aid would be the best fit for you. ☺

Sources: Mayo Clinic. [mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/adult-health/in-depth/sleep-aids/art-20047860?pg=1](http://mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/adult-health/in-depth/sleep-aids/art-20047860?pg=1). Accessed 13 February 2015.  
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## NATIONAL SLEEP AWARENESS WEEK MARCH 1 - 8

National Sleep Awareness Week is always observed during Daylight Saving Time in the spring, where we lose an hour of our precious sleep. The National Sleep Foundation is involved in research and provides sleep education to promote awareness. To see the latest information from the Foundation, "like" them on Facebook or follow them on Twitter at @sleepfoundation.

# HARVEST OF THE MONTH: BLUEBERRIES

by Laura Lubus, MPH

Not only are blueberries pretty, they are also delicious. Blueberries are an extremely versatile fruit; they can be added to both savory and sweet dishes or consumed raw. You can buy the best blueberries during the summertime, but don't forget that you can get them frozen throughout the rest of the year.

## How to select

Blueberries are easy to select just by looking at them. Blueberries should have a deep blue, almost purple color, and the skin should be taut around the fruit. If the blueberries are split on the skin or wrinkled, they should be avoided.

## How to store

Blueberries are best stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator. They do not stay for very long, but one trick to make them last longer is to only wash them right before eating. Do not wash them and then store them. Doing this will make them go bad even faster.



## How to prepare

Blueberries are delicious in their raw, unprepared form. They are also great for sprinkling on top of oatmeal or yogurt. Blueberries bake very well and provide a sweet flavor and gooey texture in muffins, cakes, and pies. ♡

## RECIPE OF THE MONTH:

### *Blueberry Banana Oatmeal Smoothie*

#### Ingredients

1 cup fresh blueberries  
1 ripe banana  
10 ice cubes  
½ cup milk (cow, soy, almond, or what you prefer)  
½ cup rolled oats  
½ cup of Greek yogurt (plain recommended to keep sugar content down)  
Handful of spinach (optional)

#### Directions

1. Add all of the ingredients to blender.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Enjoy!

Makes about 2 servings (1 serving = 1 cup)

#### Nutritional Info

PER SERVING: 150 calories, 5g sugar, 15g carbohydrates, 10g protein (varies with yogurt choice), 30mg sodium

Source: Personal recipe courtesy of Laura Lubus.