

every physiologic function in the body and there is nothing in our body that will help us to adjust to this behaviour. Our coordination suffers and we lose the ability to do things with agility. There is also a difference in immune responses depending on how much someone sleeps.

A recent study on obesity, conducted by Columbia University stated that adults who sleep the least appear to be more likely to gain weight and become obese, the reason being, less sleep disrupts hormones that regulate appetite. Studies further show sleep-deprived people tend to develop problems regulating their blood sugar, which may put them at an increased risk for diabetes. According to Harvard Medical School, after conducting a series of research on volunteers concluded that Melatonin can prevent tumour cells from growing and affects levels of other hormones such as estrogen as well -- it's cancer-protective. The theory is that if you are exposed to light at night, on average you will produce less melatonin, increasing your cancer risk. It said that people who usually work at night are prone to breast and colon cancers. Physiologic studies suggest that a sleep deficit may put the body into a state of high alert, increasing the production of stress hormones and driving up blood pressure, a major risk factor for heart attacks and strokes. Today, many researchers acknowledge that sleep is an important factor amognst many of the biggest killers.

Various findings suggest that naps can counter the harmful effects related to less sleep. Many people today are switching to polyphasic sleep instead of the traditional mono or biphasic schedule usually followed. It is a sleep pattern intended to reduce sleep time to 25 hours daily. The polyphasic pattern refers to sleeping multiple times with a view to spread out sleep into short naps of around 20-45 minutes in a 24--hour period.

Proponents claim that several famous people applied catnapping to a large extent. It is said that Leonardo da Vinci slept only 15 minutes at a time, every two hours. The term "Da Vinci sleep" is often used as a synonym for polyphasic sleep. Boat racers have used a similar technique to avoid dangers of sleeping for extended periods alone at sea. Astronauts have also occasionally tried similar strategies during a long term crises. There is a substantial interest in polyphasic sleep at NASA and among the US Military, especially the Marine Corps.

The urban legend, Thomas Jefferson slept irregularly in a single block of 58 hours in the night, always after 3060 minutes of inspirational reading. Thomas Edison attributed his tremendous amount of energy to sleeping whenever he wanted to. He is known to have slept in contempt and practiced catnapping. These famous naps, often on the floor, could take several hours. He even had a napping cot in his office. However, he would take a normal 4-5 hours sleep at night. Winston Churchill said he needed his afternoon nap to cope with his responsibilities. Eleanor Roosevelt was known to take a nap before a speaking engagement. John D. Rockefeller took a nap every afternoon in his office. William J. Clinton retired to his private quarters every afternoon at 3:00 for a 30-minute nap.

After conducting various researches professors of psychology concluded that our minds are often most creative when we relax and bosses should alter working habits to aid creativity. It further believes that the nine-to-five culture does not fit into the natural sleeping pattern of the human race and bosses need to introduce a more "sleep friendly" working environment. A two-year, world-wide internet survey found that majority of people either regard themselves as working best in the evening (38%) or in the morning (41%). Now that could be a strong indication to create sleep friendly environment with 'Napnasiums' or 'Nap Rooms' for the employees. Employees can take a break of say 30 minutes after lunch in these rooms. There can be an alarm system to wake them up after the time is over and they can again sit for work with a strong cup of coffee or tea in hand. Companies can't just keep their eyes closed to the epidemic of sleepiness on the job, especially after lunch hours! If the work productivity can be increased in this method then we ought to try it out!

Many of you may have fallen asleep and are dreaming by now, after all, in dream sleep the brain is actually very active and this is where things get very theoretical. Experts say that dreaming is actually some kind of clearing out process and that dreams serve the function of helping to reorganise and store psychological information taken in during the day. So you sleep tight and make sure to get an adequate amount of it, till then Good Bye! ■