

How To: *Include Naps in Your Training*

Naps should be a part of your routine, and follow simple rules:

- 1) Naps should be > 5 min. but less than 30 minutes.
- 2) Naps should be scheduled in the mid to late afternoon (1 – 4 pm) but not after 4 pm otherwise it affects your ability to fall asleep at bedtime.
- 3) For older athletes, naps can be combined with a dose of caffeine (cup of coffee either before or immediately after the nap). The combination of caffeine and napping has been shown to improve the restorative quality of the nap and post-nap alertness/concentration.

It is paramount that the athlete [you] determines the amount of sleep needed per week (e.g., 8 hours per day = 56 hours per week). This gives the athlete a sense of how much sleep they require and how much sleep debt they accumulate per week. With this information the athlete and support staff can develop sleep and napping strategies, which will then dictate training routines, with the ultimate goal of reducing cumulative sleep debt.

Sleep:

There is very detailed advice, linked to the Can. Sport 4 Life, LTAD model, in this [document](#). For the average teenager, it recommends 56 hours a week.

How To Take A Nap:

This summary is from the book [Take A Nap; Change Your Life](#), by Sarah Mednick, MD, 2006, ISBN-10:0-7611-4290-8.

- **Attitude:** Positive. Napping is a deliberate strategy to help you get more out of life (and training).
- **Peace:** Turn off your cell phone, computer, etc. and hang out a 'Do not disturb' sign.
- **Safety:** Choose a place in which you feel safe.
- **Dark:** Darkness is good; use a sleep mask if you can't turn out the lights.
- **Quiet:** Quiet is essential; use earplugs if you are in a noisy house, dorm or hotel.
- **Cool:** Slightly nippy temperature, 18-20 °C (65-68 °F) not a v. warm space.
- **Alarm:** Set an alarm or wakeup call so that you do not go past the 30 min. limit.
- **Posture:** Ideally, your nap-place should allow you to lie down. If you can lie down, relax your body so that there is no tension around any of your joints. Be comfortable. If you can't lie down where you are, get as comfortable as you can; try to put your feet up.
- **Clear Your Mind:** The simplest way to do this is with breathing. Consciously breath in and out. Say the word 'Relax' when you breath out. Focus your attention on the feelings you get as your chest rises and falls, your diaphragm expands and contracts and your breath goes in and out. Thoughts will naturally intrude on your nap, just focus on the breathing to replace mental activity with a calming focus. Gradually slow the breath cycle until you drift off into a *light* sleep.

Bliss out!