



newsletter

The **WellnessWorks Newsletter** is brought to you each month courtesy of **Dennis INSURANCE GROUP**, a UBA® member firm. For more information, contact us at 866.390.1871 or email to benefits@dennisinsurancegroup.com



... NOVEMBER 2012 ...

QUICK TAKES

Naptime – Not Just for Toddlers



Lions nap, dogs nap -- even dolphins take brief naps. In fact, 85 percent of all mammal species are polyphasic sleepers, meaning that they sleep for short periods throughout the day. Generally, humans are monophasic sleepers, meaning we divide the day into two parts, one for wakefulness and one for sleep. But perhaps we could learn something from our dozing fellow mammals.

The Sleep Foundation reports that Americans are becoming more and more sleep deprived. Roughly 41 million people in the U.S. get six hours or fewer of sleep a night, and that's not enough. It may be that our busy lifestyle keeps us from getting enough sleep. But can napping help? In this month's newsletter, we'll look at the:

- Benefits of napping
- Possible negative effects of napping
- Learning to power nap
- Soothing teas

The Benefits of Napping

Napping, wrote James B. Maas, Cornell University sleep expert, "should have the status of daily exercise." He and other sleep researchers report that short naps can help to improve mood, alertness and performance.

- Naps can increase alertness in the period right after the nap and may extend alertness for a few hours later in the day.
- A daytime nap can increase the brain's ability to learn new facts in the hours that follow.
- Naps can help your decision making, creativity and sensory perception.
- A study at NASA on sleepy military pilots and astronauts found that a 40-minute nap improved performance by 34 percent and alertness by 100 percent.

Possible Negative Effects

A long nap or a nap taken too late in the day may make it harder for you to fall asleep or stay asleep at night. If you already have trouble sleeping, a nap will only amplify problems.

Naps can also leave you with sleep inertia, especially after a long nap. Sleep inertia is the groggy feeling that can come when you wake up from a deep sleep. While it may last only for a few minutes, it can be a problem for those who must perform immediately after waking from a nap.

Learn to Power Nap

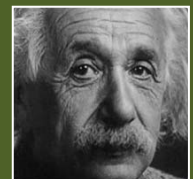
A recent study in the journal *Sleep* examined the benefits of naps of various lengths. The results showed that a 10-minute nap produced the most benefit in terms of reduced sleepiness and improved cognitive performance. A short nap provides significant benefit for improved performance without leaving you feeling groggy or interfering with nighttime sleep.

To get the most out of a power nap, follow these tips from Sara Mednick, PhD, sleep researcher at the University of California, Riverside:

- *Be regular.* Keep a regular nap schedule. Prime naptime falls in the middle of the day, between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.
- *Make it quick.* Set your cell phone alarm for 30 minutes or less if you don't want to wake up groggy.
- *Go dark.* Dim the lights or wear an eye mask to fall asleep faster.
- *Stay warm.* Keep a blanket handy because your body temperature drops while you snooze.

Famous American Nappers

What do Bill Clinton, Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, Stonewall Jackson, LeBron James, John F. Kennedy, Eleanor Roosevelt and Homer Simpson all have in common? They all are known to have valued an afternoon nap.



If you worry about sleeping too long, try the Einstein Method for a quick rejuvenation nap. Hold a pencil (or your keys or a spoon) while you're drifting off. The sound of the pencil dropping will wake you up.

A Cup of Relaxation

The health benefits of drinking tea are well established. Tea (green, oolong or black) contains antioxidant compounds called catechins that may help protect against heart disease and stroke by defending against the harmful effects of artery-clogging LDL cholesterol. But the simple act of making a good pot of tea can have its own mood-boosting and calming effect.

Keep in mind that true tea does contain caffeine, although it's nowhere near the levels of coffee. A 6-ounce cup of green or oolong tea averages 25 milligrams or less of caffeine. Black tea averages 35 milligrams, still less than half the amount in a cup of coffee. The longer you steep tea, the more caffeine it will contain. Rooibos (pronounced roy-boss), tea from the South African plant *Aspalathus linearis*, is a tasty caffeine-free alternative, as are nearly all herbal teas. The exception is yerba mate, a South American brew that contains caffeine and the strong stimulant guarana.



The best cup of tea starts with cold water. Cold water contains more oxygen, which makes the water taste better when boiled. Hot water is also more likely to pick up an off taste from dissolved minerals from the water lines. Rinse out the teapot with a swirl of boiling water and add one heaping teaspoon of tea leaves, plus one extra for the pot. Add boiling water. Allow three to five minutes for the tea to steep. Pour through a fine-mesh strainer into a teacup. For an especially soothing brew, try one of these:

- For "Gilgit tea," an aromatic, soothing brew, add three or four cracked cardamom pods to a pot of green tea as it brews.
- Drop a slice of candied ginger into a cup of hot oolong or green tea. When you finish the tea, eat the ginger.
- Many rely on chamomile as the go-to tea for relaxation and even insomnia relief. The name comes from the Greek word for "apple" and the mild, flowery tea does taste like sweet apples.
- Some sip peppermint tea to ease tension and stress. It's good for soothing sore throats, too.

Source: National Institutes of Health

Pumpkin Jumbles Makes 30 cookies

These lovely little cookies are perfect with a cup of tea. Pumpkin puree helps keep the fat content down, while pumpkin seeds add a satisfying crunch.

Ingredients

1 1/2 cups white whole-wheat or all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
Pinch of salt
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1 cup pumpkin puree
1 large egg
1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
1/3 cup light molasses
2 tablespoons safflower oil
1/2 cup unsalted pumpkin seeds (pepitas)
1/2 cup raisins
1/4 cup chopped crystallized ginger, optional

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or spray with cooking spray.
2. In a mixing bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, ground ginger, cinnamon and cloves.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk together pumpkin, egg, brown sugar and molasses until smooth.
4. Gently stir pumpkin mixture into dry ingredients. Add pumpkin seeds, raisins and crystallized ginger (if using); stir to mix.
5. Drop the batter by tablespoonfuls onto the prepared baking sheets. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes until cookies are set and tops remain intact when pressed lightly with a finger. Transfer cookies to a wire rack and let cool. Store in an airtight container for three or four days.



Nutritional info (per cookie)

75 Calories
2 g Fat
0.5 g Saturated fat
2 g Protein
17 g Carbohydrate
1 g Fiber
32 mg Sodium

Source: Healthy Living Kitchens