

THE POWER OF POWER NAPS

Toni Krasicki discovers how taking a 'renewable energy break' can boost your health.

HAVE YOU EVER had a bad night's sleep followed by a bad day? How about a lack of concentration, terrible memory and a slow reaction time? Not getting enough sleep is a health hazard and sufficient sleep is essential for good health and wellbeing, not to mention our relationships.

NapNow founder Thea O'Conner, says that 'going without sleep for 17 hours, for example, gives you a reaction time equivalent to a blood alcohol level of 0.05, which will do nothing for your athletic performance or safety on the road.' A health promotion consultant with 20 years of experience in the health sector, Thea is an advocate of introducing the 'mini-siesta' to our working lives, with NapNow focusing on promotion of the scientific proof about the benefits of napping. As our working week continues to expand, encompassing ridiculous hours, tiredness has become the most common day-to-day health complaint of the 21st century. She says 'research shows that a nap as brief as 10 minutes can alleviate tiredness, improve mood and concentration and reduce errors made at work. In practice this means lying down for about 20 minutes to allow 5 to 10 minutes to drift off.'

Having problems with your memory? Napping may just make you smarter. Thea says that naps of differing lengths offer unique benefits to different types of memories as they contain different stages of sleep. Shorter naps improve motor memory and longer 90-minute naps are good



15 MIN NAP



30-60 MIN NAP



90 MIN NAP

IT'S TIME TO EMBRACE NEW WAYS OF ORGANISING OUR WORKING LIVES, SINCE OUR CURRENT APPROACH OF WORKING HARDER, IS REACHING ITS LIMITS.

for creative problem solving. But is it possible to find time to catch some zzzzs when you have a deadline looming? 'The powernap is a moveable 'insert', that you can quickly pop into your day and feel a world of difference afterwards. It can also be a great preventative practice that allows you to remain topped up while sustaining a high level of functioning,' advises Thea.

So if you're looking for a more sane rhythm of life and more natural energy, with less burnout, embrace the 10-minute nap. You may just become happier and more successful as a result!

Sleep researcher Professor Leon Lack of Flinders University has investigated the shortest nap possible that keeps workers perky. Out of the 5, 10, 20 and 30-minute nap, he found that the 10-minute nap came up trumps. It caused an immediate increase in alertness, to about the same degree as a half hour nap did, but without causing any 'sleep inertia' or grogginess. And the benefits lasted for the next

two and a half hours – enough to get workers through the afternoon, but without interfering with a good nights sleep.

RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY SLEEP SPECIALIST DR SARA MEDNICK FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA FOUND THAT:

■ Shorter naps have mostly stage 2 sleep, which is good for alertness and pushing the reset button. It also improves motor memory, so it helps you remember any sequential motor movements you may have learned (e.g., typing or a golf swing).

■ 30 to 60 minute naps contain deeper sleep called slow wave sleep (SWS). SWS is good for verbal memories, such as learning somebody's name or remembering information you heard in a lecture or seminar.

■ 90-minute naps contain Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep. REM sleep has been shown to be good for creative problem solving.

Toni Krasiki, BHMS (Ex Sc) PGDipHlthProm
 Toni has 23 years of experience in the fitness industry and has been lugging her backpack to many corners of the world for just as long. She is a freelance writer and can be contacted at tkrasicki@hotmail.com or visit adventuregirlwrites.com

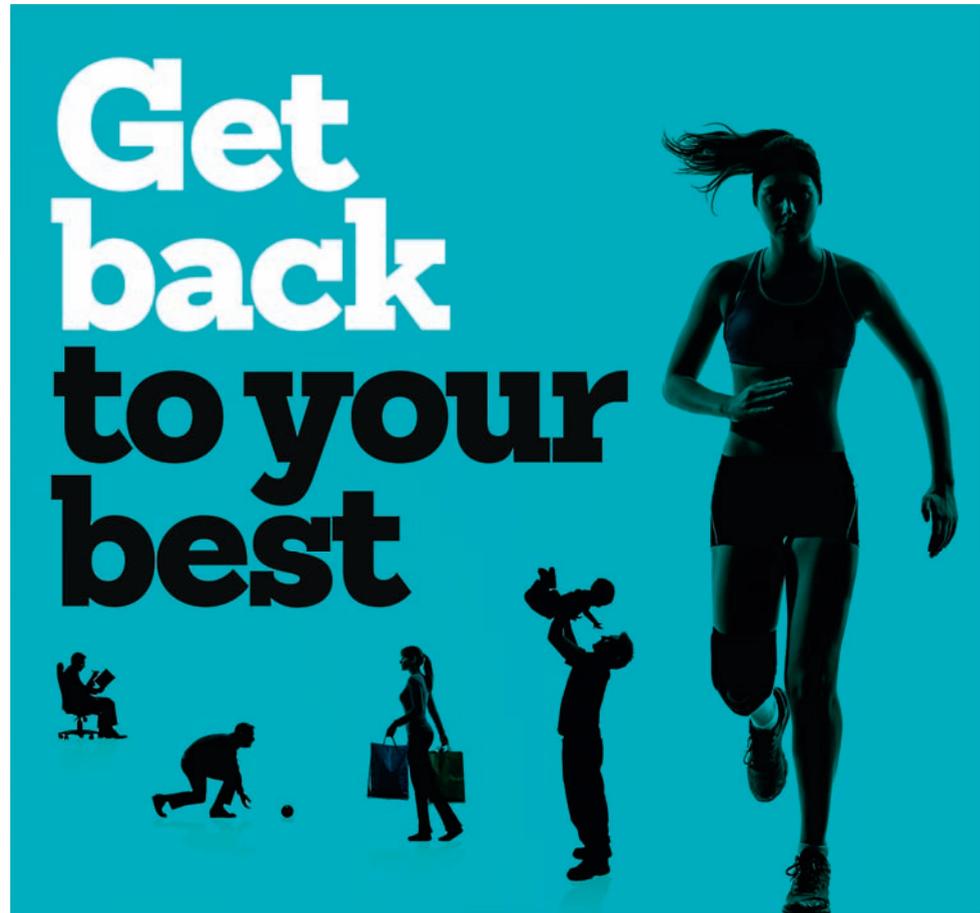
HOW TO INCREASE YOUR 'NAP-ABILITY'

- + Give yourself permission to nap.
- + Gather napping aids (e.g., earplugs, eye mask).
- + Find a suitable napping spot.
- + Wind down to release mind-body tension with yawns or stretches.
- + Don't worry if you don't fall asleep – you will still gain benefits.
- + Nap for no more than 20 minutes to avoid grogginess.

For more information from Thea

Visit

www.thea.com.au
www.napnow.net.au



Visit a Chiropractor and don't let back pain limit your lifestyle.

Visit our Facebook page to find out more about improving the postural fitness of Australia.

f /spinalhealthweek

spinalhealthweek
 20-26 MAY '13



The peak body representing chiropractors