

The J.F.K. Health and Welfare Fund, Inc.

J.F.K. International Airport
Jamaica, New York 11430

A Nonprofit Local Social, Civic, and Fraternal Association of U.S. Customs and Border Protection Employees.
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Web Site :<http://www.jfkhealthandwelfare.org>

Your Health

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How to live Longer and Healthier by being in the know.

Thomas Edison once said that "A man doesn't need any sleep." Professor Frank H. Knight, in class at the University of Chicago, 1936 said "Never waste any time you can spend sleeping." Isaac Asimov, science fiction and fiction writer said. "I hate sleeping. It wastes time."

Who was right? Is sleep important and if so, how important? Is it just an acquired habit as Edison once said and "We really devote too much time to?" There are very, very rare individuals who can apparently get by on astonishingly little sleep and function normally. (General Stanley McChrystal who runs 7 to 8 miles daily and eats just one meal a day, sleeps only four hours a night.) I am sure no one reading this can get along without "adequate" sleep. But, what is adequate?

Studies have shown that sleep is important. Average individuals require 7 to 8 hours of sleep. Individuals who get only six hours of sleep or less are three times more likely to be in a car accident while driving, even short distances. Individuals who normally sleep 9 or more hours actually have shorter life spans than those who sleep 7 or eight hours. So truly, as in everything else in life, "virtue lies in between." As with food, you can eat anything you want, but moderation is the key.

A new born baby will sleep 16 hours a day. But from about 19 to 50 years of age, most adults in the US with "normal" 8/9 to 5 jobs almost never sleep during the day. This is not true the world over. Young children typically take naps in the afternoon, but our culture frowns upon midday sleep by adults. However, even those who get enough sleep (and particularly in those who don't), many people experience a natural increase in drowsiness about 8 hours after waking regardless of the time they wake. Some may recall the TV commercial about the afternoon "valley of fatigue." It does exist! This is the point during waking hours where your body is telling you to nap! Listen to your body! Research shows that you can make yourself more alert and improve cognitive functioning by napping. Midday sleep, or a 'power nap', increases patience, lessens stress, **improves reaction time, judgment, vision, information processing**, short term memory, performance, motivation, ability to learn, efficiency and improves overall health. Are you carrying a **weapon**? How "sharp" do you want to be "**if**"?

In a six year study done in Greece and published in 2008, involving 23,000 adults, whose diets and physical activity was taken into consideration, along with if, 1. they never napped, 2. napped occasionally once or twice a week for less than 30 minutes and usually only on weekends and, 3. frequently, three + times per week for 30+ minutes. It found the occasional nappers decreased their risk of coronary heart disease by 12%, but the frequent nappers decreased theirs by 37%.

A US Air Force study involving fighter pilots demonstrates how effective napping can be, even naps as short as 20 minutes. Pilots were put into flight simulators and put through combat flight tasks until they reached the point where their skills degraded to the point that they "crashed". At this time they were taken out of the simulators and allowed to nap a full 20 minutes. Then they returned to the flight simulators where their skills were judged to be as sharp as it was during the start of their first session and they maintained that "sharpness" for a full two hours or more. You would think someone with the FAA might have taken note of this study? Think Air Traffic Controllers and the debate going on right now. If you are reading this, you now know the answer and the FAA is still clueless. Hopefully, no one will die before they realize that when you try to do more with less it becomes dangerous.

From my point of view, napping is a no brainer. But, when can you nap doing what you do? Well, you get a meal break whether it is at 12 noon, 4 PM, 8 PM or whatever time. Don't waste it! **A nap, especially for those who work rotating shifts with varying tours and extra hours of work, is more important than eating a meal.** This is the primary reasons the Fund came to be. The darkened lounge areas at the old IAB, now at IAT were created for one purpose, naps! If you don't nap, try it. If you work overtime and you get a break, nap if you can. Do this for one month and you will see a difference. A nap will also lower your heart rate and your blood pressure. Keep a nap to <30 minutes. Longer than that and you will enter a deeper sleep cycle that may interfere with your normal sleep cycle. I napped every day and still do. No lounge area in cargo, I napped in my car, weather permitting. I even napped in the conference room closet in Bldg. 77 and I always carried an eye mask. Thanks to the NTEU, we had a smoking lounge at Bldg. 77, (what the..! I mean, *How nice!*) but no place to nap! Before you nap, have a coffee. Caffeine takes 30 minutes to act. When you wake, the caffeine will give you a boost, you will not feel groggy and you will be refreshed. (The coffee is optional.)

For another view point: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-1363949/How-taking-catnap-helps-live-longer.html>

Yours in good Health, Ray Ciccolilli PS. The FAA has stated that controllers cannot nap on their meal break. The FAA is insane!