How Long to Nap

10 to 20 Minutes — This power nap is ideal for a boost in alertness and energy, experts say. This length usually limits you to the lighter stages of non-rapid eye movement (NREM) sleep, making it easier to hit the ground running after waking up.

30 Minutes — Some studies show sleeping this long may cause sleep inertia, a hangover-like groggy feeling that lasts for up to 30 minutes after waking up, before the nap's restorative benefits become apparent.

60 Minutes — This nap is best for improvement in remembering facts, faces and names. It includes slow-wave sleep, the deepest type. The downside: some grogginess upon waking up.

90 Minutes — This is a full cycle of sleep, meaning the lighter and deeper stages, including REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, typically likened to the dreaming stage. This leads to improved emotional and procedural memory (i.e. riding a bike, playing the piano) and creativity. A nap of this length typically avoids sleep inertia, making it easier to wake up.

How Long Should You Nap For?

Taking a nap is like rebooting your brain, but napping may be as much of an art as it is a science. The Wall Street Journal offers recommendations for planning your perfect nap, including how long to nap and when.

The sleep experts in the article say a 10-to-20-minute power nap gives you the most bang for your buck, but depending on what you want the nap to do for you, other durations might be ideal:

"For a quick boost of alertness, experts say a 10-to-20-minute power nap is adequate for getting back to work in a pinch.

"For cognitive memory processing, however, a 60-minute nap may do more good, Dr. Mednick said. Including slow-wave sleep helps with remembering facts, places and faces. The downside: some grogginess upon waking.

"Finally, the 90-minute nap will likely involve a full cycle of sleep, which aids creativity and emotional and procedural memory, such as learning how to ride a bike. Waking up after REM sleep usually means a minimal amount of sleep inertia, Dr. Mednick said."

In addition to those recommendations, one surprising suggestion is to sit slightly upright during your nap, because it will help you avoid a deep sleep. And if you find yourself dreaming during your power naps, it may be a sign you're sleep deprived.

While you're planning your nap, don't forget to time it during the right time of day as well.

By **Melanie Pinola** on 16 May 2014 at 11:40AM