

Defending the Afternoon Nap

I realize that this subject is loaded. In some polite circles it is absolutely verboten. In others it is ignored. But there are really some civilized people who practice it almost religiously, and swear to it's refreshing properties. I'm talking of course, about the snooze after lunch, whether observed on the living room couch, or snatched unobtrusively behind the newspaper where you think nobody can see you.

The Afternoon Nap, in the eyes of those who practice it openly at least, has some very positive thera-

peutic effects. After a long, hard mornings work and a fully refueled stomach, the metabolic processes of the human machine need to slow down for a fresh start. The mainspring must be rewound, the batteries re-charged, and the psyche re-psyched. A twenty minute snooze will do them all at

As a subject for the written page, it's almost like a confession of guilt, to be flaunted defiantly in the face of it's detractors. Yes, there are those who either sniff at us, (that's my confession), look down their nose with derision, or

pretend to look the other way when the subject comes up. They wouldn't be caught dead taking an afternoon nap. They're the kind that would rather die with their boots on. So would I, for that matter, but not without taking a nap first.

I've known whole families of afternoon snoozers. They attributed it to heredity, but I really think it was more like a contagious malady, passed down like a virus of some kind. The really nice thing about the affliction is that it is never fatal. In fact, there is good evidence that the practice contributes to a longer life. Just like letting the brakes cool off periodically on a long grade. A nap cools down the machine and prevents undue and excessive wear on the old frame. And, of course, it also rejuvenates the cranial mechanism, which is a most important consideration.

In some countries, where it has become a National tradition, they call it a "siesta." That is a polite word for taking two hours to goof off from work. I do not recommend that anyone fool away two whole hours in the middle of the day. Those countries that practice the two-hour siesta are nearly bankrupt. Take Mexico and Brazil. They owe us lots of money, which they might well repay if they would cut their siesta time in half and use it for productive work. There can be too much of a good thing, and somebody has to pay. I have no objection to a half hour nap, but don't carry it too far.

Unfortunately, some big business executives, (and also some small ones I'm told), substitute a three martini lunch for the afternoon nap. That is not only expensive, but degrading and debilitating. It has no uplifting or refreshing effect on the body or the mind. It might even contribute to an early collapse of the body, to say nothing of the business. Some practitioners of the three-martini lunch have been known to spend the afternoon on the floor, which is never conducive to rest and rehabilitation.

To nap or not to nap, that is the question. I'm all for it, but would like to offer a few guidelines. Whether you do it lying down or hiding behind the newspaper, limit it to a half hour. Just make sure that you have the approval of your spouse, to avoid undue criticism. The happiest results are obtained when you both nap at the same time, preferably behind the same

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