

Restworks Sleep Survey

Sleeping during COVID-19



Introduction

The outbreak of COVID-19 has affected and caused major disruptions in nearly all aspects of everyday life. Sleep has been no exception. Experts have coined the term 'coronasomnia' to describe the loss of sleep and overall disturbances caused by the pandemic, often referring to an increase in symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress.¹ Drastic changes to daily routines, uncertainty about the future, and health concerns have exacerbated the existing sleep deprivation epidemic which was rampant well before 2020. Prior to the pandemic, more than one third of working adults got less than the recommended amount of shut-eye per night, and mental health issues already affected one in four individuals.²⁻³⁻⁴⁻⁵ Lockdowns, isolation and a shift to remote work have altered sleep patterns and worsened emotional wellbeing, resulting in higher fatigue and burnout. Working from the comfort of their own home, many have turned to afternoon naps to get an energy boost and help them cope with disrupted daily routines. With no external pressure to stay awake, individuals have in fact become more conscious of their need to rest, and have experienced the benefits of napping for their mood and productivity.⁶

Background

Restworks – a leading provider in workplace rest solutions – has surveyed more than 2000 adults across the United Kingdom, United States, and Australia to better understand sleeping behaviours and attitudes towards napping when working remotely. Overall results show widespread sleep deprivation and a higher tendency to take naps at home when compared to at the office, due to lack of facilities and stigma surrounding sleeping on the job. This white paper outlines the key insights of the survey, providing an overview of how the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent shift to remote working have impacted sleep habits and specifically napping behaviour.

Findings

45% of participants developed a napping habit when working from home. 85% of these reported engaging in the practice more than when they commuted to an office. Following a brief rest session, respondents experienced increased energy levels, higher productivity, better mood, and lower stress and anxiety. In light of the considerable benefits derived from naps, 3 out of 4 participants agree on the need for employers to encourage rest in the workplace.

Challenges of the pandemic

Insomnia

A global study conducted in 2021 across 63 countries found that almost 50% of respondents reported poor sleep quality.⁷ In the UK, the number of people suffering from insomnia rose from one in six to one in four in 2020.⁸ Furthermore, 60% of Britons experienced disturbed or reduced sleep since the lockdown was announced, with two in five people sleeping fewer hours than usual.⁹ In the US, search queries for insomnia rose by 58% during the first few months of 2020, suggesting a sharp increase of poor sleep compared to years prior.¹⁰

**42% of office workers
did not get enough sleep during
the COVID-19 pandemic**

Among office workers, 42% of employees admitted to not getting enough sleep, with only 17% reporting adequate nighttime rest. Women have been put at a greater disadvantage during the pandemic, widening the disparity in sleep deprivation among genders. The percentage of women experiencing poor sleep was 23% higher than their male counterparts. When comparing individuals with children under 18, 49% of working mothers suffered from sleep deprivation in contrast to only 35% of

working fathers. A direct relationship between sleep and income level was also identified: half of individuals with a household income of less than \$35K (A\$48K, £25K) per year did not get sufficient sleep. In contrast, only one-third of those earning over \$100K (A\$137K, £73K) reported poor sleep.

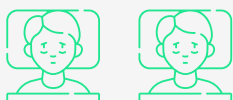
Across occupations, entry level employees were the most sleep deprived (46%). At the other hand of the spectrum, only 22.5% of C-level executives did not get adequate sleep. Previous studies have observed fatigue to be widespread among leaders, with over 40% getting less than six hours of shut-eye per night.¹¹

Our survey confirmed these findings, with only 59% of Managers and Vice Presidents consistently getting the recommended hours of sleep per night. Company size appears to play a role in sleep as well: self-employed individuals or those working in small companies (<25 employees) were more prone to suffer from poor sleep than their counterparts working in larger organizations (500-1000 employees).

HOW WAS SLEEP AFFECTED BY THE PANDEMIC?



Search queries for insomnia during the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic



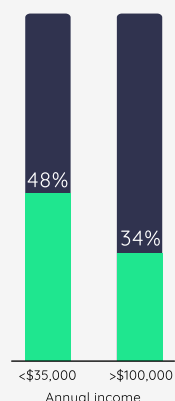
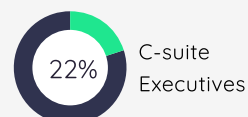
From **1 in 6** to **1 in 4**
individuals affected by insomnia



49% **35%**

Women with children vs men with children suffered from sleep deprivation

Of those who answered 'no' to the question: "do you get adequate sleep at night?"



Mental health

As a result of disrupted social and work routines, two out of five employees reported a decline in their mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, it is the blurred boundaries between work and private lives caused by the switch to remote work that has led to worsened mental health for over 44% of individuals. Those working remotely for two+ weeks were in fact 50% more likely to suffer from declining mental health, due to increased chronic sadness and fatigue. Higher levels of stress and anxiety were reported by 66% and 57% of employees, respectively.¹²

44% of employees saw their mental health worsen as a result of the shift to remote work

Two-thirds of workers believe burnout to have gotten worse during the pandemic. Recognised as an occupational phenomenon by the World Health Organization,¹³ workplace burnout has been on the rise among professionals in different age groups, industries, and experience levels, and has particularly affected those working from home. Besides financial and health concerns, longer working hours and the difficulty to find work-life balance have been identified as the culprit. Over 50% of employees who transitioned to remote working

admitted working more hours than they were in the office, with the average workday increasing by over 2 hours.¹⁴⁻¹⁵⁻¹⁶ Microsoft studied over 30,000 people in 31 countries, finding an exhausted global workforce, of which 54% felt overworked under the pressure of upholding productivity.¹⁷

Globally, depression and anxiety disorders amount to US\$1 trillion each year in lost productivity

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, one in three employees have seen their productivity decline due to poor mental health.¹⁸ Research has found that only 60% of employees suffering from ill mental health are productive, compared to 86% of those who rate their mental health as good. Similarly, only 47% feel engaged in the workplace (vs. 79% of those with stable mental health).¹⁹ An analysis conducted by Deloitte in 2017 found that poor mental health costs UK employers up to £45 billion (US\$61bn, A\$84bn) per year.²⁰ In the US, depression alone is costing up to US\$44 billion (A\$60bn, £32bn).²¹ Globally, depression and anxiety disorders amount to US\$1 trillion (A\$1.38tn, £730bn) each year in lost productivity according to the World Health Organisation.²² Post pandemic, these figures are only expected to increase.

HOW WAS MENTAL HEALTH AFFECTED BY THE PANDEMIC?



2 in 5

Saw their mental health decline since the beginning of the pandemic



66%

Remote workers experienced high levels of stress



+2 hours

Increase of the average workday when working from home



54%

Felt overworked during the lockdown due to pressure to uphold productivity

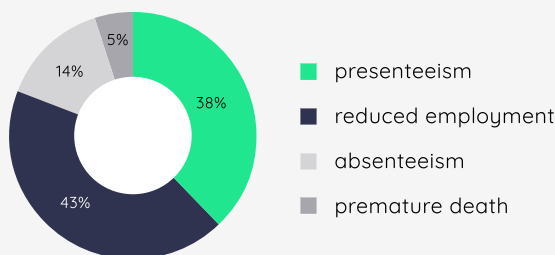
Consequences of fatigue

Productivity

Work-related factors are among the most overlooked contributors to poor sleep health. The increased pressure to meet challenging performance objectives has often translated into long working hours and demanding workloads, to the detriment of sleep. While nutrition and exercise are at the forefront of the employee health agenda, the harmful impact of fatigue on corporate bottom lines has largely been overlooked. Sleep deprivation has been linked to absenteeism (i.e. regular absence without good reason) and presenteeism (i.e. reduced work performance due to working while sick), which impose a burden on organizations as well as the wider economy.²³ It has been estimated that the US economy loses the equivalent of 1.23 million working days due to insufficient sleep, and a total of US\$411 billion (A\$566bn, £301bn) per year.²⁴ In the UK, the figure amounts to £40 billion (US\$54bn, A\$75bn) per year, or roughly 1.86% of the country's GDP.²⁵ Similar research carried out in Australia found that the yearly cost of inadequate sleep is A\$17.88 billion (US\$12.97, £9.52bn), 68% of which is due to productivity losses (A\$5.22bn reduced employment, A\$0.61bn premature death, \$1.73bn absenteeism and A\$4.63bn presenteeism).²⁶

HOW DOES SLEEP DEPRIVATION IMPACT PRODUCTIVITY?

Productivity losses due to inadequate sleep



\$411B

Yearly cost of sleep deprivation for the US economy

1.23M

Working days lost in the US every year due to insufficient sleep

Work performance

Fatigue has been found to negatively affect cognitive and psychomotor performance, resulting in impaired decision making and reduced alertness.²⁷ Specifically, studies have found that individuals sleeping less than six hours a night for over a period of two weeks perform as poorly as someone who has been sleep deprived for 48 hours, as their memory and concentration are significantly compromised.²⁸ According to office workers taking part in surveys conducted by the US National Sleep Foundation and Hult International Business School, inadequate sleep makes it harder to stay focused in meetings (69%), focus on daily objectives (66%), take on additional tasks at the end of a regular work day (66%), listen carefully to others (62%) and produce quality work (61%).²⁹⁻³⁰ Furthermore, sleep deprivation negatively impacts innovation and creativity, hindering the ability to generate new ideas and solutions. Overall job satisfaction as well as career progression are also negatively affected.³¹

Mood and work dynamics

Sleep deprivation sets the stage for negative thinking and emotional vulnerability: when the ability to sleep eight hours a night is impaired, mood changes are more frequent, and emotional regulation is disrupted.³² In a study conducted among working professionals, 84% of respondents admitted feeling more irritable - and 75% more stressed - at work without adequate sleep. Respondents also became more easily frustrated when things did not go according to plans (71%). During the pandemic, poor sleep was found to be associated with a two-three times increased risk of anxiety, moderate depression and stress.³³

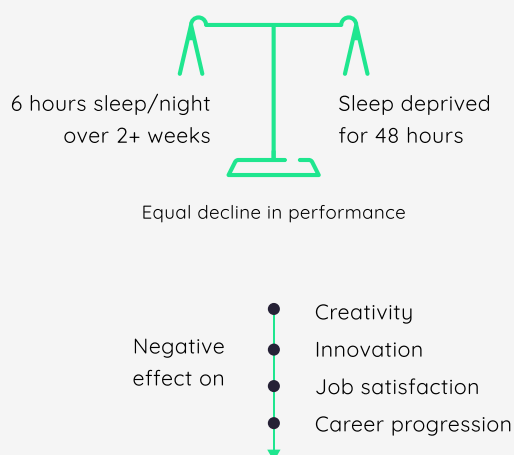
84% of employees feel more irritable at work when sleep deprived

According to studies, the negative consequences of

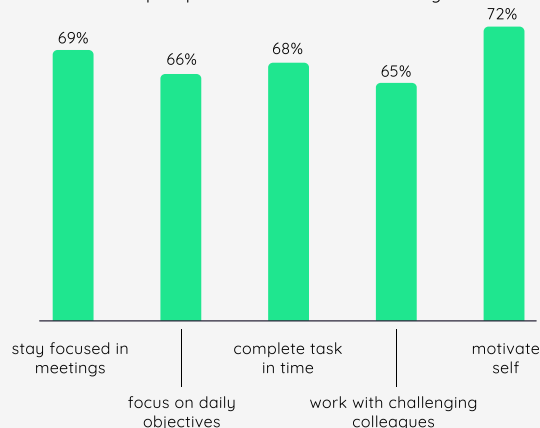
sleep deprivation can have ripple effects across the whole organisation. An article published in the Academy of Management Journal found sleep deprivation to be a cause of abusive behaviour (i.e. hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviour, excluding physical contact) in the workplace which, in turn, increases stress, reduces job satisfaction and performance.³⁴ In particular, research on the repercussions of poor sleep quality among leaders on their employees' work engagement has attracted the attention of academics and practitioners alike.³⁵ When suffering from fatigue, senior managers admitted finding it hard to motivate others and have difficult conversations, as well as being less mindful of their impact on their

subordinates.³⁶ Similarly, sleep deprived managers tend to have a detrimental impact on their teams' emotions and behaviours, resulting in uninspired employees and worsening relationships in the workplace.³⁷ Besides the effects on office dynamics, poor sleepers have been found to be seven times more likely to feel helpless and five times more likely to feel alone, compared to those getting enough rest.³⁸ For individuals with pre-existing mental health issues, lack of sleep can be particularly dangerous as it lowers the threshold for suicidal thoughts and behaviours.³⁹

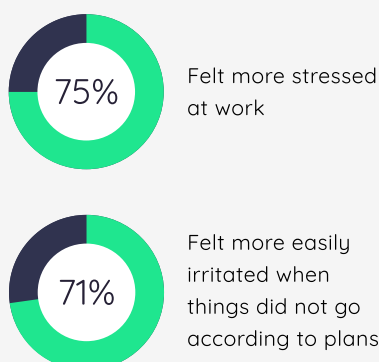
HOW DOES SLEEP DEPRIVATION IMPACT PERFORMANCE?



In a survey conducted by Hult International Business School, sleep deprivation affected the ability to



HOW DOES SLEEP DEPRIVATION IMPACT MOOD AND WORKPLACE DYNAMICS?



Difficulty in motivating others

Increased abusive behaviour

Worsening workplace relationships

5x more likely to feel helpless

7x more likely to feel alone

2-3x higher risk of anxiety, moderate depression, and stress

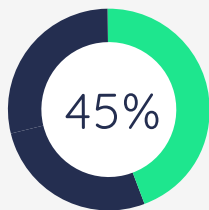
Napping

The Restworks' 2021 Sleep Survey found that 45% of respondents have picked up a new napping habit while working from home. Out of these, 85% reported taking a daily nap more than when they commuted to an office. Differences have been found across age groups with younger workers taking more naps in contrast to their older counterparts (58% of 18-24 year olds vs. 29% of 55+ year olds). Similarly, men were more likely to nap during the workday compared to women, regardless of their job title (52% vs. 39%).

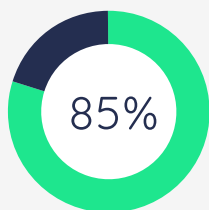
When napping at home, one in two participants got into the habit of taking a short rest once or twice per week, while one in three napped up to three or four times per

week. Conversely, at the office, only a minority (one in five) took naps once or twice each week, with the remainder not engaging in the practice. Naps taken at home tend to be longer than those taken at the office, with an average duration of 20-60 minutes versus less than 20. To reap the maximum benefits of short rest, a 20-minute nap has been recommended by experts as it allows for an increase in alertness without the sleep inertia (or drowsiness) that can occur with longer naps.⁴⁰ In both cases, however, the majority of rest sessions took place between noon and 2pm. This is the ideal window for a nap to counter the natural dip in energy levels that typically occurs in the early afternoon.

WHO TOOK THE MOST NAPS?



Got into the habit of taking a nap when working from home

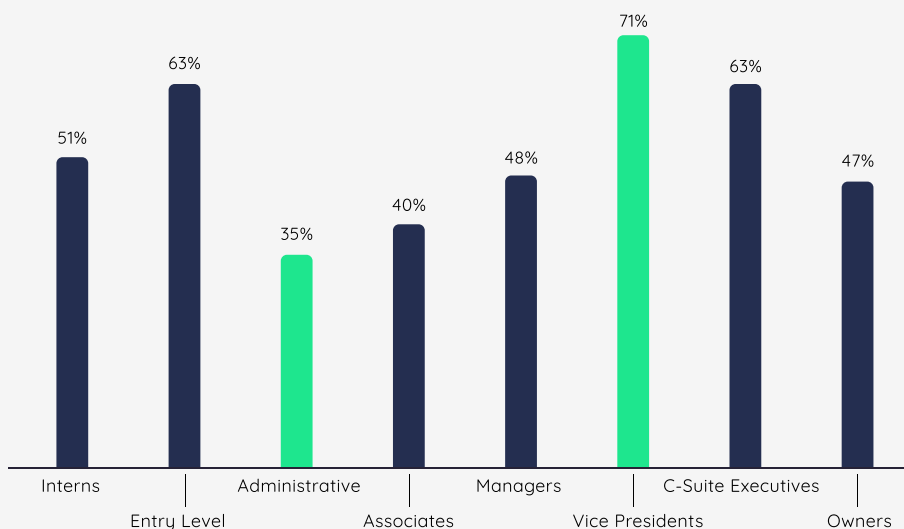
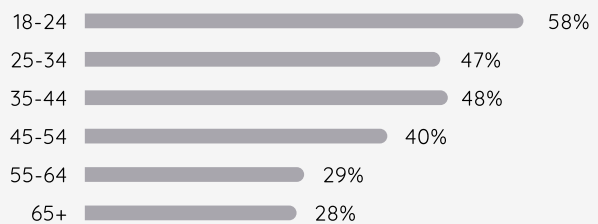


Took more naps when working from home than when they commuted to an office



incorporated a nap in their daily schedule

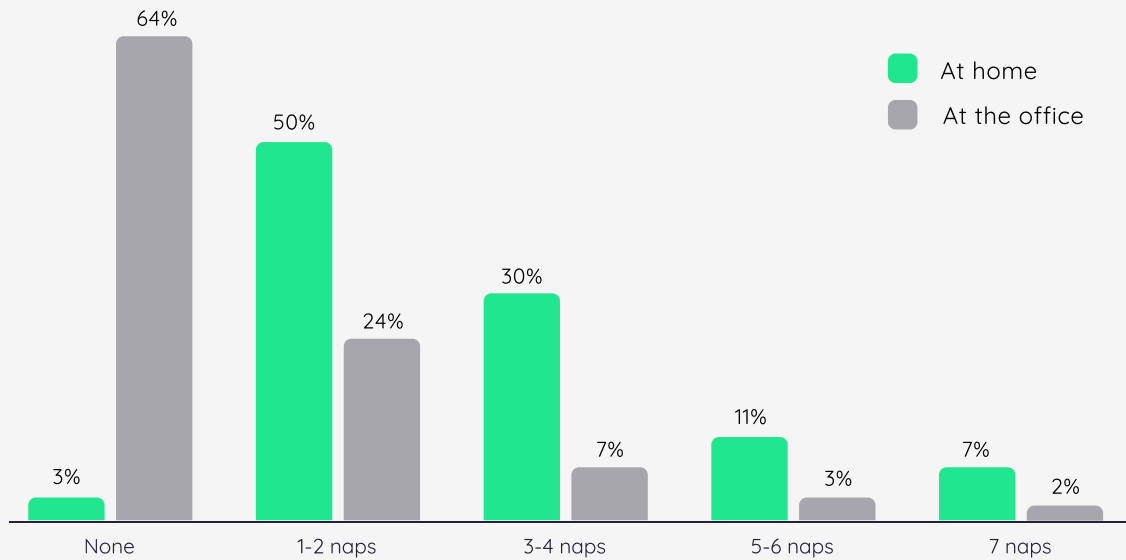
age group:



NAPS AT HOME VS. AT THE OFFICE

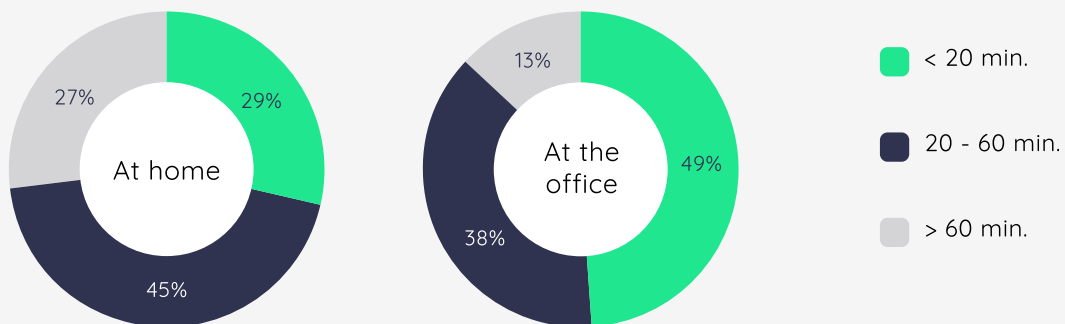
How often did participants take a nap?

(per week)

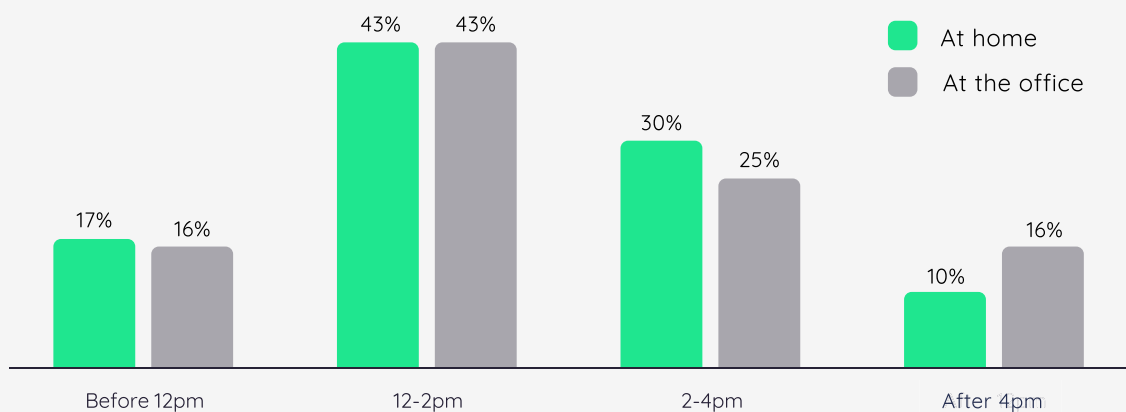


How long did the naps last?

(minutes per session)



When did the naps take place?



Benefits of napping

Napping and work performance

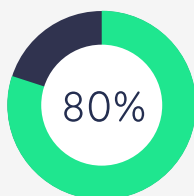
Short rest has been proven highly effective in mitigating the consequences of a lack of sleep: 74% of participants in the Restworks survey reported being more productive at work while 73% noticed a stark increase in their energy levels after taking a short nap during their workday. Studies have found brief naps (<30 minutes) to improve alertness (+54%) and cognitive performance (+34%) for a period up to three hours, with greater benefits experienced by those who regularly nap.⁴¹⁻⁴²⁻⁴³⁻⁴⁴ Similarly, increased attention to detail and decision-making proficiency have been measured, as well as improvement in memory and learning; following a short nap, information retrieval has been found to increase five-fold.⁴⁵⁻⁴⁶ Finally, naps are more effective than caffeine - which is often consumed for its stimulant properties - in improving performance.⁴⁷

Napping and mental wellbeing

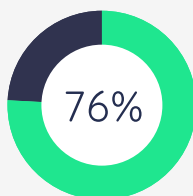
In the study, 76% of employees experienced an improvement in their mood after a nap, felt less stressed (76%), more relaxed (80%) and less anxious (71%). Napping for as little as ten minutes has been demonstrated to improve mental state by increasing feelings of relaxation and joy while reducing sadness.⁴⁸ Short rest also reduces impulsivity and promotes tolerance for frustration, by fostering higher emotion regulation.⁴⁹ Finally, naps help relieve stress even after a disrupted night's sleep.⁵⁰

NAPS AND MENTAL WELLBEING

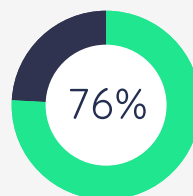
After taking a nap during the workday



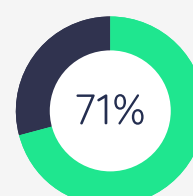
Felt more relaxed



Experienced an improvement in their mood



Felt less stressed



Felt less anxious

What is the impact on mental wellbeing?



Feeling of relaxation



Feeling of joy



Reduced sadness



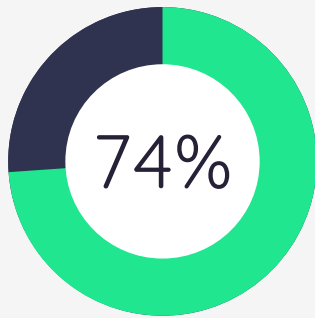
Higher emotional regulation



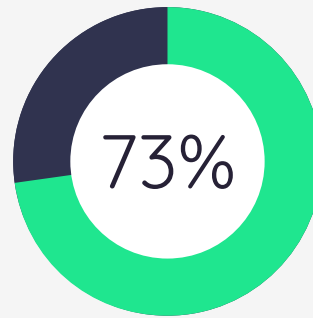
Less frustration & better impulse control

NAPS AND WORK PERFORMANCE

After taking a nap during the workday



Reported being more productive at work



Noticed an increase in their energy level

What is the impact on work performance?



+54%

Alertness



+34%

Cognitive performance



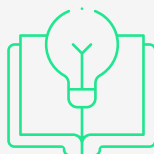
5x

Information retrieval

Taking a nap improves...



Attention to detail



Memory and learning



Decision-making proficiency



Performance
(tip: it's more effective than caffeine)

Naps at the office

During the pandemic, almost one in two workers developed a napping habit and experienced the considerable benefits of short rest. A return to the office, however, could put an end to this newly found practice and the ability to recharge during the workday. Prior to the switch to remote work, 64% of employees did not take naps at the office. In Australia, the figure is as high as 71%, compared to 57% in the US and 67% in the UK. Among the factors that prevent employees from napping in the workplace, 61% mentioned a lack of acceptance of napping in their company culture, while 37% do not have enough time in their daily schedule. Further, 74% do not have access to napping facilities in the workplace.

74% do not have access to napping facilities in the workplace

Despite increasing awareness of the consequences of fatigue, stigma surrounding sleep in working environments still exists. According to an article published by the Sleep Research Society, the most common misconceptions see individuals who nap as lazy, and lead to questions about why someone should be paid to sleep on the job. What these points of contention fail to take into account is the

detrimental impact of sleep deprivation on corporate bottom lines: preventing employees from taking a short nap during working hours can cost employers more in the long run through absenteeism, reduced productivity and lower quality output.⁵¹

Rest facilities in the workplace

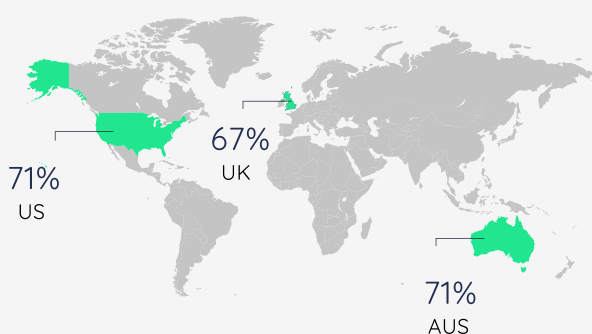
In preparation to returning to the office, workers are not ready to abandon their newly acquired napping habits. In our study, 72% of participants agreed that employers should encourage naps in the workplace and would welcome dedicated facilities. Young professionals are more fervid advocates compared to their older counterparts (78% of 18-34yo vs. 42% of 65+), reflecting the pattern in their napping behaviour during the pandemic. Contrary to previous generations, moreover, Millennials and Gen Zers prioritize workplaces promoting a healthy work/life balance and offering supplementary benefits such as in-office wellness.⁵²⁻⁵³

72% of participants think their employers should encourage naps in the workplace

NAPS AT THE OFFICE

64% of respondents did not take naps when working at an office

These stats vary across countries:



Among the key reasons why:



Corporations are progressively waking up to the detrimental effects of sleep loss, and are increasingly adopting rest solutions to promote healthier habits for their employees. In the Restworks' survey, globally, 79% of C-level executives (and a whopping 86% in the US) expressed their support for the idea, backing the introduction of nap breaks during the workdays.

Restworks solutions

Workplace napping is not one size fits all. As organizations around the world get ready for the return to the office, the Restworks team will be your partner in workplace wellness and fatigue management. Our experience and knowledge in the field of sleep position us to be your unique solution for daytime rest for your employees. We will observe the specific patterns and needs of your organization. From our analysis, we will create a customized plan to provide the sleep technology and education necessary to help optimize your workforce for better efficiency on the job and an increased level of physical and emotional well-being. We will combine equipment such as massage chairs and recliners with sleep education to meet the needs of your organization. Our clients span from medical clinics to athletic teams, start ups with a handful of employees to multi-national corporations with locations around the globe.

Our signature product, the EnergyPod, is the world's first chair for napping in the workplace and represents an innovative solution that allows businesses to convert virtually any space into a rest area. Similarly, our Podtime equipment offers privacy, security and comfort, enabling users to relax or sleep undisturbed in the workplace. All of our equipment optimizes nap durations and provides facility management tools powered by Sleepwing technology.

Besides workplace facilities, Restworks provides solutions to help employees nap and sleep more efficiently at home. For example, the Restworks Mobile App combines audio sessions from the world's leading providers, as well

as tips and tools to support good habits for more restful sleep. Our team is also happy to arrange seminars where participants can learn about the importance of sleep for physical and mental wellbeing, along with concrete tips on how to reap the maximum benefits of rest both at home and in the workplace.

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