

## Community Living

Z6 | FRIDAY, 04.24.15 **17**

**LAURI LEADLEY** SLEEP SOUNDLY

### Short naps can improve performance



Americans are known for working hard and doing whatever it takes to get the job done. Maybe that's why the idea of taking naps makes some people feel uncomfortable.

But some pretty powerful Americans have relied on the power of naps, including John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan and John D. Rockefeller. While naps won't make up for poor quality nighttime sleep, they can improve your performance and boost your mood.

Naps are identified in three ways: planned napping, emergency napping and habitual napping. You might plan a nap when you know you're going to be up later than normal while an emergency nap occurs when you're too tired to continue whatever you're doing. Habitual napping is when you take a nap at the same time every day.

Generally, afternoon is the best time to nap, usually between 1 and 3 p.m. If you work or sleep odd hours, a nap can

be most beneficial about seven hours after you wake up. There is ongoing debate over how long to sleep. In the 1990s NASA researchers determined a 26-minute nap was ideal for pilots because it improved performance by 34 percent and alertness by 54 percent.

The National Sleep Foundation recommends 20-30 minutes for short-term alertness that won't leave you feeling groggy. How do you nap away from home? Start by finding a quiet, restful place to lie down. That will help you fall asleep faster than sitting upright.

Set an alarm, use eye shades if the room isn't dark and earplugs if you need to block out noise. Slow down your breathing and focus on a relaxing scene.

So, the next time you need an afternoon pick me up, skip the candy or coffee and try a nap instead.

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**MATTHEW BARAL** NATURAL HEALTH

### Take steps to limit chlorine exposure



With summer almost here, kids are hitting the pool to escape the sweltering heat. Although most parents are concerned with keeping their kids safe from harmful UV rays and skin cancer, they may be surprised to find that danger lurks in the chemicals in their pool water as well.

Most public and personal pools use a chlorine system to disinfect their pools and keep them free of infectious organisms. Yet despite its cleaning benefits, using chlorine has some negative consequences. Chlorine gas is a known irritant to the lungs. Believe it or not, it was used in the early 20th century as a chemical weapon in France.

Research has even linked chlorine pool exposure to certain cancers and miscarriages. Swimming in chlorine pools can worsen asthma, hay fever and allergies. Belgian researchers have found that children who swim once a week in a chlorinated pool had the same

amount of lung damage measured by oxidation as adult smokers.

#### Steps towards a healthier family

1. Purchase a non-chlorine or reduced chlorine system. Ozone, ionization and salt-systems are great alternatives.

2. Protect your family from chlorine exposure. Since chlorine can cause oxidation, supplementing with anti-oxidants such as Vitamin E, C, Selenium and CoQ10 can counteract chlorine's damaging properties. Quercetin, a substance found in high amounts in onions, can decrease histamine release. Taking it on a regular basis during the summer can help prevent allergy symptoms caused by swimming in the pool.

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