



Companies make room for the office power nap, recognizing need for rest - Cassandra Szklarski, The Canadian Press, February 10, 2019

Snoozing on the job isn't just permitted at Bob Vaez's software company, it's encouraged. The Toronto boss of EventMobi describes himself as "the only CEO that promotes people to sleep at work," insisting the policy boosts productivity and company morale. To that end, EventMobi's open-concept waterfront office features a private nap room where workers can grab a few Zs if they feel sluggish, or just get some alone time in a dark space if they have a headache or don't feel well. "It's just from my own experience," Vaez says of his reasons for setting up the quiet space. "As (with) any other tech professional worker, you work really odd hours and your brain just sometimes shuts off. Especially after lunch you just can't work and I've been to other offices (where) people sleep at their desk and it's really frowned upon. If you can't work, what's the point?" The benefits of adequate sleep are well-established, but Vaez's willingness to address tired staffers in such a direct way is relatively rare. Still, he's not the only one. Google Canada spokesman Aaron Brindle says nap rooms can be found in the tech giant's offices around the world, including the Toronto office where a wellness space for nursing mothers can be reserved for taking a break, or taking a nap. Another space at their engineering headquarters in Kitchener, Ont., features two high-tech recliners with large spherical privacy visors for extra-tired employees looking to grab some shut-eye. Meanwhile, management consulting firm Accenture says its three-floor Toronto office features a wellness room where staffers can snooze. That's in addition to various inclusivity initiatives – gender neutral and accessible washrooms, a room for nursing mothers, and a meditation/prayer room with a foot-washing station. It's a phenomenon that seems primarily centred in technology and marketing sectors, says Alina Owsianik, director of talent acquisition, diversity and inclusion at Randstad Canada. Owsianik knows of at least five Randstad clients with nap rooms, and credits their existence to a new generation of workers who increasingly blur the line between their home and work lives. "Millennials are spending much more time than our parents did at work. They also work crazy hours, different hours, and we want to adjust the work style and the balance to their needs," she says. "(That includes) a lot of development shops, technology shops, where maybe there are crazy deadlines or people like to work in the evenings (and) have a nap during the daytime. That's why we see employers actually adapting the workspace and creating a dedicated space to take a nap." She believes it's more than just a fad, insisting "they are becoming more and more popular" as an added tool to recruit top talent. Owsianik says Randstad began testing its own version of the nap room, dubbed the "recharge room," after an employee committee suggested the measure as a way to address mental-health issues. It has a couch, diffuser with essential oils, a salt lamp, mats for stretching, and a couch for resting and napping. "There are a lot of people that are not declaring disability or mental disability," she notes. "And we are working in a highly sales-driven environment where there is a lot of stress so we really wanted to create a space where people can relax, have a nap." For job-seekers weighing multiple offers, a healthy workplace can win them over, she adds, believing many workers want more than just a good salary. "Millennials and the younger talent and the younger generation are looking more for the rewarding career (and) self-development rather than just the pay." Universities, too, are recognizing that some of their students are exhausted by long commutes, awkward class schedules, jobs and personal commitments. Two years ago, the student union that jointly serves Humber College and the University of Guelph-Humber created two sleep lounges for its two Toronto campuses, and then doubled the number of beds at one of them last September. The expanded lounge now has 12 beds while the second hosts eight. Together, they've drawn about 4,000 users this school year, well surpassing the 3,000 that dropped by during the entire school year in 2017-2018, says the union, known as Ignite. "We are a commuter school and a lot of our students, they don't get to go home until maybe eight or nine hours after they've had a whole day on campus," says union president Monica Khosla, who represents students at both schools, which includes a satellite campus for the University of Guelph. Over at Toronto's Centennial

College, the student union bought four so-called “EnergyPods” by the U.S. company MetroNaps last August, adds spokesman Brad Beamish. One has been installed next to the cafeteria, another in the library. Their many features include a retractable privacy visor, speakers that whisper relaxation music and pre-programmed relaxation guides, wake alarms, lights and vibration controls. “There were basically people jumping in them before they were finished being set up. The demand was almost immediate,” Beamish recalls. Productivity expert Lisa Belanger is glad to see such initiatives afoot, noting that other countries seem to understand the need for work/life balance far better than Canada. She points to Finnish sauna culture and the Swedish coffee break known as Fika. “Europe is doing better on this for sure with valuing vacation, respite, weekends,” says Belanger, a post-doc researcher at the University of Calgary whose work includes looking at effective break strategies. Historically, labour breaks were introduced to boost efficiency, she notes. These days, they are eliminated in the belief they slow us down. “Coffee breaks were designed in the industrial era so that it increased productivity, reduced safety concerns and injuries and errors,” says Belanger, also CEO of the consulting firm ConsciousWorks, which looks at how brain health, nutrition and sleep affect performance. “It’s gotten to the point where we kind of skipped over them. We put our coffee in a to-go mug and just get it in us as quickly as possible and forget that our brain requires breaks.”

1. Rambam, Hilchot De’ot 4:1, 4:4 (Chabad.org translation)

הואיל והיות הגוף בריא ושלם מדרכי השם הוא שהרי אי אפשר שיבין או ידע דבר מידיעת הבורא והוא חולה לפיכך צריך להרחיק אדם עצמו מדברים המאבדין את הגוף ולהנהיג עצמו בדברים המברין והמחלימים ואלו הן...
היום והלילה כ"ד שעות די לו לאדם לישן שלישי שעות שהוא שמונה שעות ויהיו בסוף הלילה כדי שתהיה מתחלת שנתו עד שתעלה השמש שמונה שעות ונמצא עומד ממתו קודם שתעלה השמש:

Since maintaining a healthy and sound body is among the ways of G-d - for one cannot understand or have any knowledge of the Creator, if he is ill - therefore, he must avoid that which harms the body and accustom himself to that which is healthful and helps the body become stronger. They are as follows...

Together, day and night make up [a period of] twenty four hours. It is sufficient for a man to sleep a third of this period; i.e., eight hours. These should be towards the end of the night, so that there be eight hours from the beginning of his sleep until sunrise. Thus, he should rise from his bed before sunrise.

2. Iyov 3:13 (JPS translation)

קִי־עַתָּה שְׁכַבְתִּי וְאֶשְׁקוּט אֶשְׁנֶתִי אֶזְ | יָנוּחַ לִי:

For now would I be lying in repose, asleep and at rest,

3. Chomat Anach to Iyov 3:13

הקדמונים נתנו סימן למ"ש הרמב"ם ז"ל דכ"ד שעות של היום. ח' מהם יכול לישן וח' לת"ת ומצות וח' למשא ומתן וזה סימן ישנתי א"ז גימטריא ח' וח' למשא ומתן והסימן כי א"ז תצליח. וח' ללימוד והסימן וא"ז תשכיל אלו דבריהם ז"ל

The early authorities gave a hint to what the Rambam wrote that there are 24 hours in a day. One may sleep for 8 of them, 8 are designated for learning Torah and performing mitzvot, and 8 are for earning a livelihood, and this is the allusion: yashanti “AZ”, which has a gematria of 8, and 8 for earning a livelihood is alluded to by ki “AZ” tatzliach. And the 8 for learning have the allusion of ve“AZ” taskil, these are their words, may their memories be blessed.

4. Ba’er Heitev Orach Chaim 1:6 (said in the context of sleep)

...והכל לפי מה שהוא אדם.

...Everything depends on the person.

5. Talmud Bavli Sukkah 53a (Davidson Edition translation)

תניא אמר ר' יהושע בן חנניה כשהיינו שמחים שמחת בית השואבה לא ראינו שינה בעינינו כיצד שעה ראשונה תמיד של שחר משם לתפלה משם לקרבן מוסף משם לתפלת המוספין משם לבית המדרש משם לאכילה ושתייה משם לתפלת המנחה משם לתמיד של בין הערבים מכאן

ואילך לשמחת בית השואבה איני והאמר רבי יוחנן שבועה שלא אישן שלשה ימים מלקין אותו וישן לאלתר אלא הכי קאמר לא טעמנו טעם שינה דהווי מנמנמי אכתפא דהדדי:

It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Ḥananya said: When we would rejoice in the Celebration of the Place of the Drawing of the Water, we did not see sleep in our eyes the entire Festival. How so? In the first hour of the day, the daily morning offering was sacrificed and everyone came to watch. From there they proceeded to engage in prayer in the synagogue; from there, to watch the sacrifice of the additional offerings; from there, to the synagogue to recite the additional prayer. From there they would proceed to the study hall to study Torah; from there to the eating and drinking in the sukka; from there to the afternoon prayer. From there they would proceed to the daily afternoon offering in the Temple. From this point forward, they proceeded to the Celebration of the Place of the Drawing of the Water. The Gemara wonders: Is that so? But didn't Rabbi Yoḥanan say: One who took an oath that I will not sleep three days, one flogs him immediately for taking an oath in vain, and he may sleep immediately because it is impossible to stay awake for three days uninterrupted. Rather, this is what Rabbi Yehoshua is saying: We did not experience the sense of actual sleep, because they would merely doze on each other's shoulders. In any case, they were not actually awake for the entire week.

6. Talmud Bavli Sukkah 26a-b (Davidson Edition translation)

רבא אמר אין קבע לשינה...

Rava said: Neither with regard to sukka nor with regard to phylacteries is there concern lest he fall into a deep sleep. Taking a brief nap outside the sukka is prohibited because there is no concept of substantial duration with regard to sleep, i.e., there is no halakhic difference between a brief nap and a longer-lasting sleep. Depending on circumstances, sleep of any duration can be considered substantial and is therefore prohibited outside a sukka...

וכמה שינת עראי כדי הילוך מאה אמה...

And how long is the duration of a brief nap? It is equivalent to the time required for walking one hundred cubits... אמר רב אסור לאדם לישן ביום יותר משינת הסוס וכמה שינת הסוס שיתין נשמי אמר אביי שנתייה דמר כדרב ודרב ודרבי כדוד ודוד כדוסיא ודוסיא שיתין נשמי אביי הוה ניים כדמעיל מפומבדיתא לבי כובי קרי עליה רב יוסף (משלי ו, ט) עד מתי עצל תשכב מתי תקום משנתך

Apropos the duration of a brief nap, the Gemara cites that Rav said: It is prohibited for a person to sleep during the day longer than the duration of the sleep of a horse. One who sleeps for longer is derelict in the study of Torah. And how long is the duration of the sleep of a horse? It is sixty breaths long. Abaye said: The sleep of the Master, Rabba, is like that of Rav, and that of Rav is like the sleep of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. And that of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi is like that of King David, and that of King David is like that of a horse. And that of a horse is sixty breaths. The Gemara relates: Abaye would sleep during the day for a period equivalent to the time it takes to enter from Pumbedita to Bei Kuvei. Rav Yosef read the following verse as pertaining to Abaye: "How long will you sleep, sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?" (Proverbs 6:9). Rav Yosef considered this dereliction in the study of Torah.

7. Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 231:1

אם אי אפשר לו ללמוד בלא שינת הצהרים יישן ובלבד שלא יאריך בה שאסור לישן ביום יותר משינת הסוס שהוא שתין נשמי
If it is impossible for him to learn without a nap, he should sleep, so long as he doesn't take an extended nap, as during the day it is prohibited to sleep more than a "horse's nap", which is 60 breaths.

8. Shulchan Aruch/Mappah, Orach Chaim 4:16 (Wikisource translation)

דוד היה נזהר שלא לישן שיתין נשמיין (פירוש ששים נשימות) כדי שלא יטעום טעם מיתה: הגה ובגמרא פ' הישן משמע דדוקא ביום היה נזהר: (דברי עצמו ועיין בב"י):

[King] David was diligent not to sleep shitin nishmin (meaning, sixty breaths) in order not to taste the taste of death.(Gloss: But in the Talmud, Chapter HaYashen, it appears that he was diligent in this only during daytime.) (his own opinion, and see the Beit Yosef)

9. Mishna Berurah, Orach Chaim 4:36

השיגו עליו האחרונים דלא נמצא שם כן בגמרא רק על האמוראים אבל דוד בעצמו גם בלילה היה נזהר ונ"מ כ"ז לדין שבעל נפש יחמיר עכ"פ ביום. ואין שבת בכלל זה. ועיין לקמן בסימן רל"א ס"א דאם א"א לו ללמוד בלא שינת הצהרים מותר לישן מעט אבל לא יאריך בה עיי"ש ועיי"ש עוד שגם זה לא תהיה כונתו להנאת עצמו רק לעבודתו יתברך. ועיין במחצית השקל שכתב דענין השינה ביום תלוי לפי מה שהוא אדם וכפי הצורך לעבודתו ית':

The Acharonim asked on him that this is not found in the Gemara, it is only said referring to the Amoraim, and that King David himself was careful of this even at night! The practical difference for us [between whether we follow the Acharonim or Shulchan Aruch] is whether or not a particularly pious person should be stringent during the day. Shabbat is not included in this. See Orach Chaim 231:1 that if it is impossible to learn without an afternoon nap, it is permitted to sleep a bit, but not for a lengthy period of time, and see there further that even this should not be with the intention of enjoyment, but rather for the service of G-d. See the Machatzit Hashekel who writes that sleeping during the day depends on the person and what is necessary for G-d's service.

10. Biur Halacha Orach Chaim 4:17:1

דוד וכו' שיתין נשמי - רבו בו הדעות בשיעור זה י"א שהוא ג' שעות וראיה מהא דהאר"י ז"ל היה ישן בשבת ב' וג' שעות ויש דוחין דשאני ת"ח בשבת דמצוה לענג השבת ועוד אינו מוכרח כלל דשמא היה ניעור כמה פעמים בתוך שינתו ולא היה ישן ס' נשמיין בפעם אחת וי"א דהוא יותר מחצי שעה וי"א דהוא שיעור מעט יותר משלשה מינוט ע"כ בעל נפש יחמיר לפי כחו:

David... 60 breaths – there are a number of views on what this length of time is. Some say that it is 3 hours, and they support this from the fact that the Ari z"l would sleep 2 or 3 hours on Shabbat, and there are those who disproved this, noting that it is a mitzvah for a Talmid Chacham to sleep on Shabbat for Oneg Shabbat, and anyways it is not certain, since he many have woken up many times during his nap, and he may have never slept 60 breaths at one time. And some say that it is more than half an hour and some say that it is slightly more than 3 minutes, therefore, a ba'al nefesh should be stringent according to his strength.

11. Aruch Hashulchan Orach Chaim 231:1-3

...והנה הרמב"ם לא הביא זה כלל וטעמו פשוט שהרי אביי ניים הרבה מדקרי עליה ר"י עד מתי וגו'...מיהו עכ"פ שמענו דאין הלכה כן דזהו פשיטא דניים יותר משתינ נשמי וברור הוא שזהו טעמו של הרמב"ם שהשמיט זה ובוודאי בענין כזה הכל לפי מה שהוא אדם וגם ממס' אבות פ"ג [מ"י] יש ראיה לזה דתנן התם שינה של שחרית ויין של צהרים וכו' מוציאין את האדם מן העולם דבשינה של שחרית עובר זמן ק"ש אבל שינה של צהרים לא תנן וכן ראינו לגדולי עולם שהיו ישנין ביום כשעה או שתיים דכך הוצרכו לפי חלישותם ולפי הנהגתם: אך הטור והש"ע פסקו כן ומ"מ דברי הטור יש ליישבם וז"ל הטור אחר שגמר סעודתו יחזור ללמוד ואם א"א לו ללמוד בלא שינת הצהרים יישן ובלבד שלא יאריך בה הרבה גרסינן בסוכה וכו' שתינ נשמי אביי הוה ניים וכו' קרי עליה ר"י וכו' עכ"ל ולפ"ז לא פסק שאסור לישן יותר משיתין נשמי אלא שלא יאריך בה הרבה כלומר שיישן הרבה שעות כבלילה וודאי אסור דא"כ תורתו מתי נעשית ואח"כ הביא הך דסוכה להשמיענו שיש שהחמירו עד שתינ נשמי ויש שהקילו בזה מיהו עכ"פ לא יישן הרבה: אבל דברי רבינו הב"י תמוהים...וקשה מנ"ל איסור זה דהרמב"ם לא הביא זה כלל וגם הטור לא כתב איסור על זה והטור דקדק בדבריו כמ"ש ואיך כתב על זה לשון איסור במה דמוכח מהש"ס להדיא דאביי לא עשה כן וצ"ל דס"ל לרבינו הב"י דאין כאן מחלוקת כלל וגם אביי מודה לזה אלא דס"ל הכל לפי מה שהוא אדם והוא לא היה ביכולתו להסתפק בשיתין נשמי ורבינו הב"י כתב למי שבריאיתו חזקה ויכול להסתפק בשיתין נשמי ומ"מ לא היה לו לסתום הדברים וצע"ג ואחר שיעור משנתו א"צ לברך ברכת אלקי נשמה דאין זה רק בבוקר וי"א שיקרא קודם שישן ביום ויהי נועם משום מזיקין [מג"א] וגם בזה אין אנו נוהגים: