

Napping and Exercise Training in Athletes

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Many studies have examined the use of a daytime nap, as well as its potential benefits, unwanted side effects and moderating factors. One important moderating factor of sleep is exercise. Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the effect of exercise and other related factors on subsequent nocturnal sleep, with varying results and conclusions. The purpose of this paper was to systematically review the literature on the use and benefits of nap sleep, as well as the effect of endurance exercise and exercise related factors on sleep. The results of this review indicate that the benefits associated with daytime nap sleep include improved alertness, cognitive and reaction time performance, and reduced fatigue, but that these effects may be moderated by various influences such as prior wakefulness, circadian timing and habituation to nap sleep. Other results suggest that there may be an association between exercise and increased slow wave sleep (SWS), but that this relationship may be affected by factors such as fitness level, training status and body temperature effects. These findings are analysed and synthesised, and their implications for further research are discussed.