

Polyphasic Sleep

How to have 19 to 22 conscious hours every day

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

Quick sizing exercise

Bartering for extra time -
what would you pay?



If the devil offered you a deal, what would you pay for extra time? Like most of the Devil's deals, it comes at a cost, but...
... this is real extra time – you don't have to wash more, prepare food more, commute more.

:: pause ::

If your answer isn't approximated by “a lot”, this session is probably of only academic interest.

Other options

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Diet & Exercise

Melatonin

Light

Meditation

CES machine

Training

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Paleo diet, primal exercise (marksdailyapple.com)

Melatonin (gwern.net/Melatonin, 50mins/night)

Bright light on waking, avoid blue light near sleep (F.lux)

Mindfulness meditation (Google)

Cranial Electrical Stimulation (Google)

Training – drop 30mins and hold for 1 week, repeat; don't go below 6hrs (sleepwarrior.com/train-your-body-to-function-on-less-sleep-is-it-possible)

Disclaimer

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Scholarly research isn't strong on polyphasic sleep...

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Lots of people *doing* this,
not much academic, controlled research available
(a couple of civilian researchers and some more military research).

The model I'm going to share:

I can't falsify.

Is ~accepted by the <http://www.polyphasicociety.com/>
community.

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acting out).

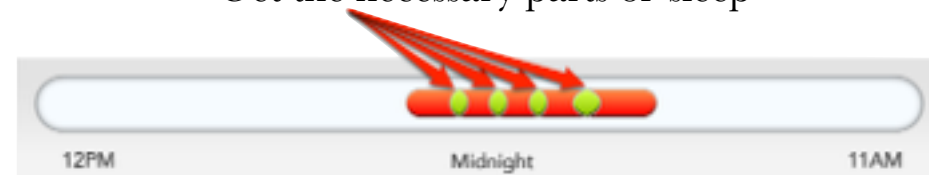
Executive summary

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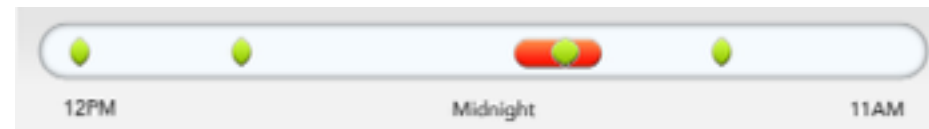
By a very difficult adaptation process



Get the necessary parts of sleep



In short naps spread across each day



Warning: This document involves a group adaptation experiment. This document may contain information about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

Diagram credit: <http://dustincurtis.com/sleep.html>

For much less total sleep time



You'll still dream

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cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent
acting out).

You'll dream more often

You'll still have that wonderful feeling
of curling up in bed...



and going to sleep

You'll go to sleep more often

*This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation
Warning: This doc missing warnings about possible severe
experiencing during sleep deprivation (including violent
cognitive disturbance acting out).*

You'll still have that wonderful feeling
of waking up feeling rested and refreshed

You'll wake up more often

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experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe
cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent
acting out).

~~Long wake periods~~

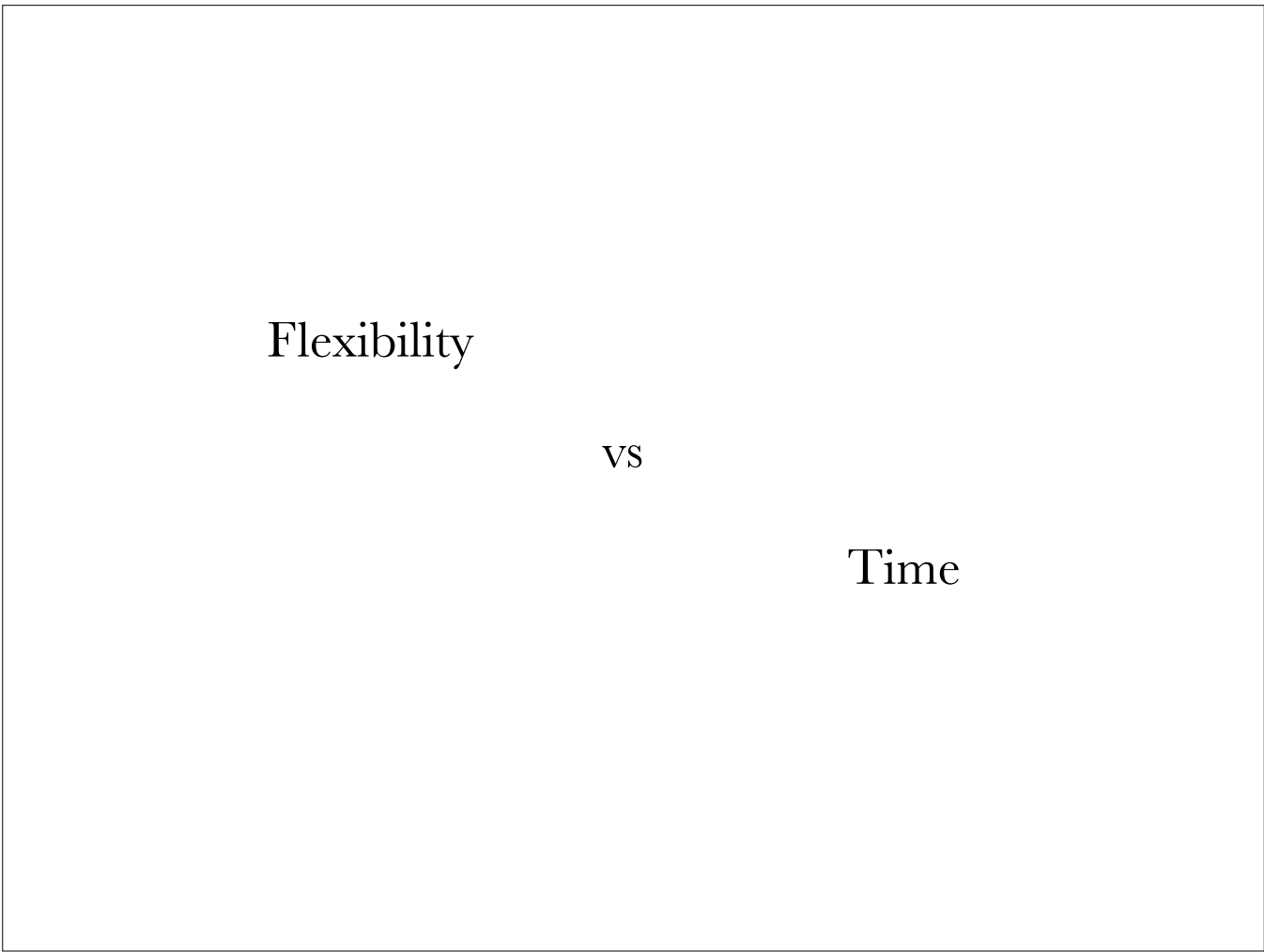


Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

While on this schedule your ability to stay awake for many hours without a nap will be compromised.

You have range of options that trade...

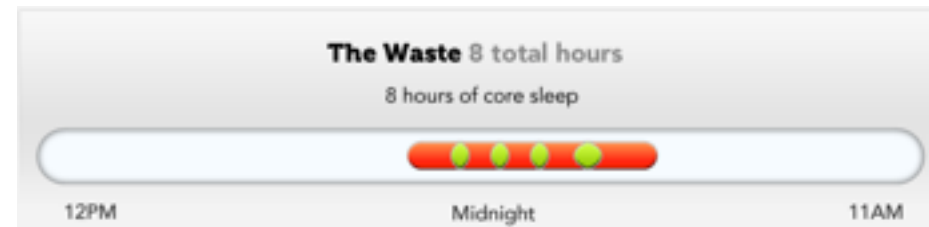
Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).



Flexibility: Longer waking periods and lower cost of mixing up your schedule
Time: Less total time sleeping

Your options...

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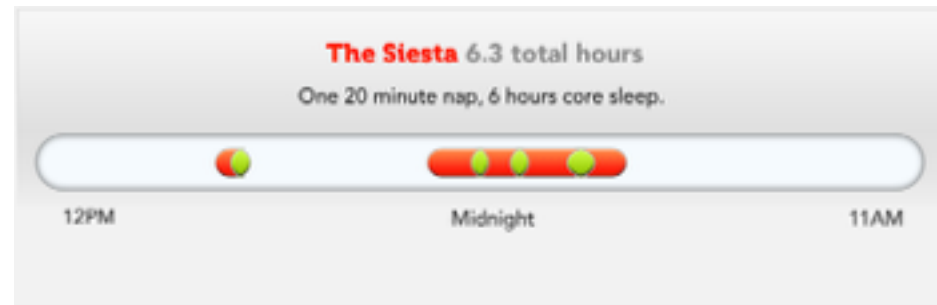
<http://www.dustincurtis.com/sleep.htm>

low efficiency, high flexibility

Warning: This doc invalidates the 15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc misrepresents about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out)

7–8 hours works for most people.

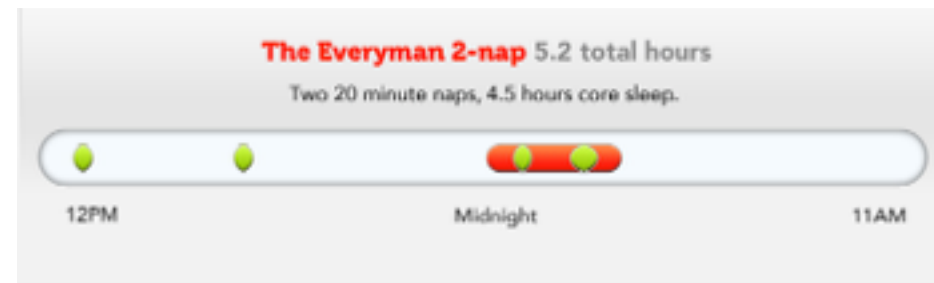
Some people have claimed that most people could significantly improve their cognitive function by increasing this towards 10 hours, that is, with better sleep most people could be smarter.



Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out)

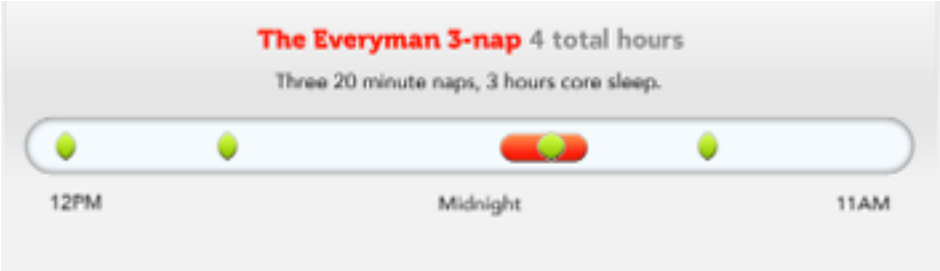
C6N1

Much of Europe gets by on less sleep by napping during the day.



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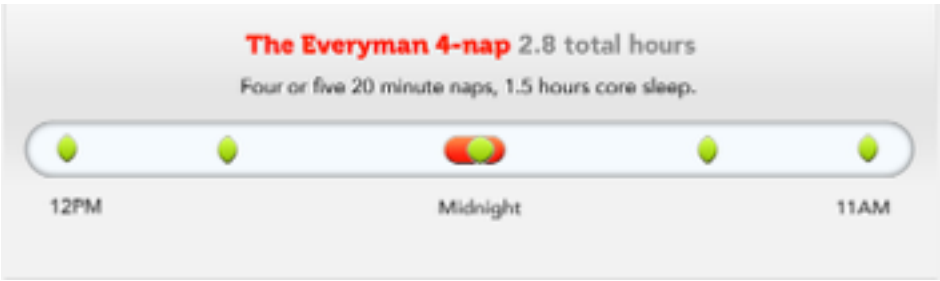
G45N2



medium efficiency, medium flexibility

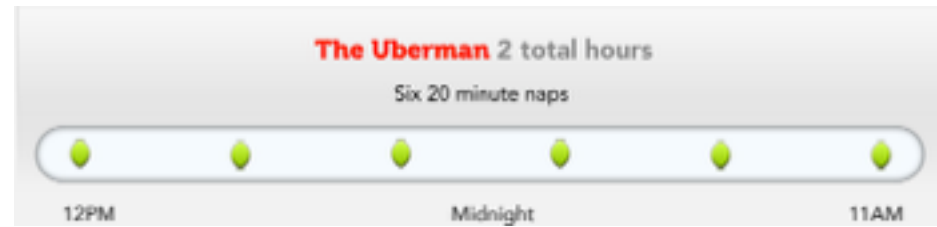
Warning: This doc is invalid for a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc misrepresents the possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

(This is my schedule, and probably the most common schedule amongst active polyphasers.)



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C45N4



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6C0.3

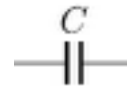
I couldn't make this work.

A digression

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If 2 hours is sustainable...

... what's happening for the rest of a normal sleep schedule?



You don't need the rest of what your body does during a monophasic sleep block, but it doesn't do nothing – it builds your ability to stay awake for long stretches.

(Model: a sleep capacitor that takes time to get to full charge).

Also, might not be the right question.

30 months

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acting out).

I've been doing this for 2.5 years

this works

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My average sleep before this experiment was 7.3hrs. Getting out of bed was hard, I was often sleepy after lunch, and I was often tired by 9pm. My schedule now is a 3hr core + 3 × 20 minute naps. Extra naps or occasional core extensions push my average sleep to 4.5hrs/24. I've been on this or other polyphasic schedules for a long time and I've never felt better. (↑ goodness preceded extra goodness from ↑ diet; was approximately parallel with ↑ exercise.)

Interesting question about evidence:

many people try and fail to adapt

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How much should you learn from noting that someone tried and failed vs learning that someone tried and succeeded?

anyway

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acting out).

Adaptation is hard.

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Adaptation is hard. The overwhelming majority of those who try on their own fail. Most fail at about day 4. Many drop at about day 7. Many drop at about a month.

I took
3 months of being very tired most of the time

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acting out).

I wasn't really loving this until about 3 months.

I took
3 months of being very tired most of the time

but I did it wrong!

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Forevernade's process makes adaptation easier and faster (like the dark side of The Force), but anchor off 3 months.

If you can maintain discipline,
I think you can do this in...

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A week of fairly easy preparation

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~3 days of very nasty sleep deprivation

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~2 weeks of being below optimum

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With some significant schedule disruption...

Perhaps a month of having some sleepy periods

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Then a lifetime of **awesome**

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Advantages

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Time.

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

Time!

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

REM napping capability

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Being able to do a REM nap is awesome, even in you revert to monophasic.

On Uberman:
many report euphoria and *subjective* improvement in
cognitive ability

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No more jet lag

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Neutral

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Meditation / focus breaks

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There are significant happiness + productivity advantages available by taking time out to meditate every day. Meditation is a great way to start your naps.

= mental state resets

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Time.

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

You have to find something to do with that time

~~Time.~~

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So, work on that problem

Costs

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Widely reported:
You need disciplined napping.

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I'll talk about flexibility soon, but if you usually (habitually) sleep at the same times you'll get to sleep faster and sleep more efficiently. If you habitually postpone or skip naps you'll suffer sleep deprivation. Sleep deprivation is bad.

Widely reported:
You will occasionally bounce off a nap

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Especially when excited!

You'll need to find time to take that nap when you do feel tired, or push through a tired period. On Uberman this is very hard (at least at the beginning). On E3 this is annoying but not very hard.

Just meditating for 20 minutes is very restful... but not as restful as a REM nap.

(try for 10m, then try again after 30m
or push through the tired period before next nap)

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acting out).

Widely reported:
You'll pay when you skip naps.

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If you postpone a nap too long, it won't work efficiently. (I don't know why.)
I can do it with caffeine, but I have historically needed to pay 90 mins sleep the following night.
You might experiment with nicotine (half-life 2hrs).

Occasionally reported:
Your eyes can feel a little scratchy.
(Being open for longer?)

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cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent
acting out).

Just me?
In situations I find boring I'm more likely to
nod off

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cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent
acting out).

Meetings I don't want to be in. Polite dinner with mind numbing chit chat. Tedious lectures.

Worth experimenting with SNS activation strategies.

No problem with high activation scenarios.

Your use of drugs gets complicated...

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No caffeine during adaptation
(half-life too long)

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Bad: caffeine & stimulants

Bad in excess: alcohol

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- caffeine and stimulants: you can't sleep efficiently with these in your system
- alcohol (interferes with sleep quality, but not nearly as much as stimulants)

Model

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

You need 1 to 1.5hrs/24 REM.

Most people suffer from lack of REM sleep within
~15-20hrs.

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cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent
acting out).

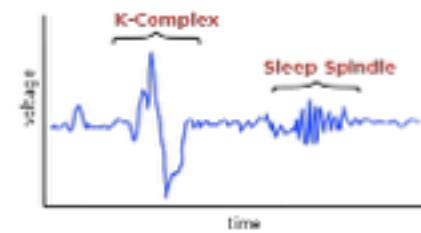
You want 1 to 1.5hrs/24 Slow Wave Sleep (SWS).

Most people suffer from lack of SWS within 7 days.

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The other sleep you're getting...

... you seem to be able to get by without



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... it's enabling you to stay awake for long periods, but that's it.

Your body will (eventually) take the opportunities you offer it
to get REM & SWS.

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cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent
acting out).

If you adapt to a more extreme schedule
you'll adapt much faster

(you'll mostly adapt to Uberman in a week
you'll mostly adapt to Everyman3 in a month
adapting directly to Siesta will take a long time)

Warning: This doc is validated by a ~15 person group adaptation
experiment. This doc is validating warnings about possible severe
exhaustion during sleep deprivation (including violent
cognitive dysfunction)

You have two adaptations to make:

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1. Circadian rhythm

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To make you feel sleepy and wakeful at the right times.
With a time zone shift you're changing your circadian rhythm.

2. Sleep repartitioning

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To get enough REM & SWS in the opportunities you allow.

Doing both of these at once is harder than doing them separately.

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... and this is why so many have failed in the past.

Adaptation plan

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Prepare
Become sleep and food deprived
Offer many naps
Wait for REM sleep
Move to desired schedule
Settle

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Prepare

Sort out your alarms

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We're building a system for the dude who will be in control of your body when you're supposed to be waking up.
This dude is not you.
This dude does not care about your plans.
This dude must be trained to hand control of your body over to you.

iPhone Wake 'n Shake

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Loud alarm that will wake your partner
(and tell them to be angry at you)

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cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent
acting out).

Alarm on the far side of the room

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Permission for your housemates to do nasty things to you if
you oversleep

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cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent
acting out).

Multiple alarms

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Prepare

Practice napping

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Like Critch said, practice

Prepare

Tuesday: Start napping

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You won't be tired enough to sleep properly, but you'll get into the habit.
I suggest mindfulness meditation as a way to make this time useful.

Sleep & Food

Thursday lunch: Start fasting

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Sleep & Food

Thursday night: Skip sleep

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Do whatever you have to do to stay awake. This shouldn't be too hard, but you might have a rough patch. Consider: cold showers; stand up and hold a full glass; exercise; music. If you're standing up you won't sleep for long.

Sleep & Food

Friday morning: Breakfast

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Offer many naps

Friday: U12 / *ad libitum* naps

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Rule: you must be properly awake for 40 minutes before
napping again

Best schedule: nap 20 minutes every 2nd hour.
Or: *Ad libitum*.

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experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe
cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent
acting out).

Drooping at your desk doesn't count as being properly awake.

Don't oversleep!

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Nap at least once / 4hrs

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Soon... you'll dream

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acting out).

You'll get the nap transition. You'll dream during naps. You'll lose track of time. You'll feel very refreshed.

You just learned to get REM sleep during your naps

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Drop naps towards a pure Uberman

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

Life will begin to improve, and you'll be able to drop naps, pushing towards a pure Uberman (20 mins sleep starting every 4th hour). Drop naps as quickly as you can while staying as functional as you need to be. The most important part of this period is that you don't sleep for longer than 20 minutes at a time, but the earlier you can get to a pure Uberman schedule the better. Take naps as you need them (with at least 40 minutes awake and moving around between naps) while pushing towards Uberman. The longer you can maintain pure Uberman before introducing a longer core sleep block the further along you'll be to a full adaptation.

Wednesday? Thursday?

It'll start to hurt again...

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

It'll get hard again and you'll get tired – you've run out of slow wave reserve.

If you can hold out
you might become an Uberman

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experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe
cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent
acting out).

You might learn to get SWS in your naps.
I tried for 2 months and couldn't.
Others have reported more than success on Uberman for > a year.

→ desired schedule

Adopt your preferred schedule

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Hold the course

Expect improvement over the next month (or more)

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Summary

Adaptation to Everyman3

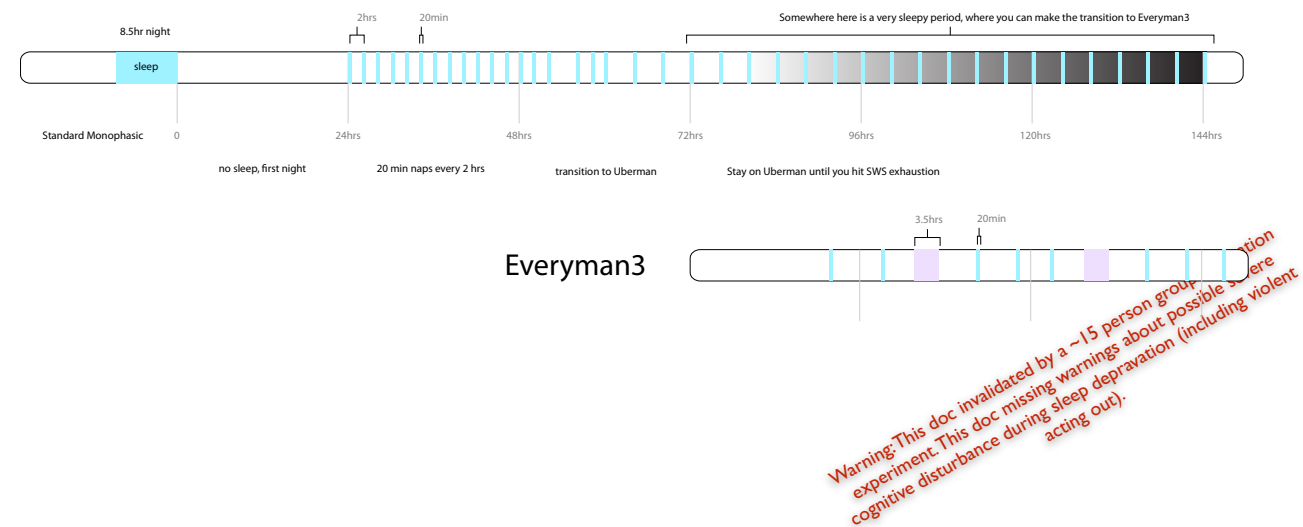


Diagram credit: Michael Andregg

Reasons not to do this

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Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

pause::

Think of your objections to doing this, and ask yourself if a good resolution to those objections would convince you to try polyphasic.

::pause::

is that your true rejection?

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If I answered that conclusively, would you adopt a polyphasic schedule?

Bad reasons not to do this

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

Objection: You like sleep.

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I think you don't actually like **sleep**.

I think you like:

going to sleep

waking up refreshed

feeling well rested

dreaming & remembering your dreams

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On polyphasic sleep you'll get more of **all** of the things you like.

Objection: You don't want to be sleep deprived all the time.

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This isn't sleep deprivation.

(except during adaptation)

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

Objection: It's just too weird.

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It's weird, but your world will get used to it.

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

My extended social circle (met through our daughter's school friends) have been extremely accommodating, and ducking away for 20mins during a social event is easy.

Objection: It's unnatural.

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Some anthropological research suggests our ancestors may have broken night time sleep into two blocks and included daytime napping.

Much of Europe uses a siesta.

Babies nap and must be trained to adopt monophasic sleep.

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Objection: You just don't expect it to work for you.

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Calculate the Value of Information
vs the Cost of Information.

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Many people with serious sleep issues have found that this improved their lives

Objection: Finding time for naps is impossible for you.

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Some problems respond well to using the

try harder

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

Polyphasic sleepers can nap in cars, toilet stalls, on the floor in a quiet corner, on the floor in a quiet corner of the nearby library, under their desk, and in many other places; and many managers can see the benefits they gain by giving you more flexibility if you trade with them.

Good reasons not to do this

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

Objection: You *really must* regularly be awake for 7+ hours
at a time.

(but consider siesta or E2 or siesta)

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation
experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe
cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent
acting out).

Objection: You don't know what to do with the time you already have.

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

Objection: Three weeks of pain is insufferable.

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

History of parasomnia

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parasomnia>

Questions?

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Resources

Warning: This doc invalidated by a ~15 person group adaptation experiment. This doc missing warnings about possible severe cognitive disturbance during sleep deprivation (including violent acting out).

Theory:

<http://www.polyphasicociety.com/polyphasic-sleep/overviews/everyman/>

Experience:

<http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2005/10/polyphasic-sleep/>

...and see links at bottom, particularly...

<http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2005/11/polyphasic-sleep-log-days-25-30-final-update/>

Note that Steve's experience of the flexibility of his near-uberman schedule doesn't match with other reports. I think this flexibility may be available after stabilisation, but come at a high cost before.

<http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2006/01/polyphasic-sleep-update-day-90/>

Steve's report of euphoric mood is fairly common on the Uberman schedule, and much less common on schedules that include regular core sleep.

<http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2006/02/polyphasic-sleep-20/>

Some experiments in flexibility

<http://www.stevepavlina.com/blog/2006/04/polyphasic-sleep-the-return-to-monophasic/>

Why did he stop?

And <http://trypolyphasic.com/forum/forum/17/adaptation/>

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My sleep tracks:

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/107056/audio/Nap_20-22mins-heart.mp3
https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/107056/audio/Nap_90-92mins-walla-heart.mp3
https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/107056/audio/Nap_15mins-heart.mp3
<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/107056/audio/nap-loop.m4a>

My schedule calculator:

<http://bit.ly/poly-schedule-tool>

A good sleep mask.

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