



THE POWER NAP PLAYBOOK

A Recovery Tool for Elite Junior Hockey Players

Why the best recovery tool on your roster might be a nap.

Napping is a performance strategy — on par with lifting, nutrition, and stick work. Not a sign of laziness.

THE BIG PICTURE — daytime napping generally improves athletic performance — most consistently for **mental sharpness, repeated-sprint / repeated-shift ability**, and how recovered athletes *feel*. Effects on some raw physical outputs are more mixed, and depend on how the nap is timed and structured.

01 WHAT NAPS ACTUALLY IMPROVE



Reaction Time & Focus

Faster decision-making — useful for reading plays and reacting to pucks.



Repeated-Sprint / Shift Performance

Better output across multiple sprint or shift efforts — directly relevant to shift-based hockey demand.



Perceived Recovery & Lower Fatigue

Players feel less fatigued and rate exertion as easier after napping.



Mood & Sleepiness

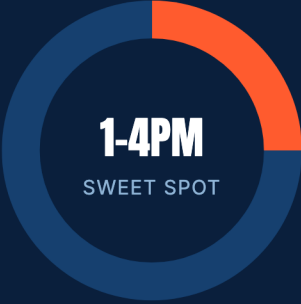
Naps reduce sleepiness and improve mood state pre-training or pre-game.



Bonus for Youth Athletes

In trained ~18 yr-old athletes, a well-timed nap improved shuttle-run performance and recovery ratings — without hurting next-day soreness.

02 THE NAP FORMULA



TIMING

Early-to-mid afternoon, roughly 1:00–4:00 PM — matches the natural post-lunch dip.

DURATION

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20–90 minutes total range. Sweet spot for most athletes: **~20–45 min.**

Longer naps (60–90 min) boost cognitive performance more — but need a longer wake-up buffer. Plan around game/practice times.



Wake-up buffer: allow 30–60 minutes between waking and stepping on the ice to shake off grogginess before competing.



WATCH FOR SLEEP INERTIA

Waking from a nap causes a short window of grogginess and reduced alertness/agility — usually gone within 15–30 minutes, but it can stretch close to an hour after a longer nap. **Never schedule a nap right before puck drop or a testing session** — build in recovery time after waking.

03 WHY THIS MATTERS MORE FOR JUNIOR PLAYERS

8-10 HRS

Teen athletes generally need more sleep per night than adults — and most don't get enough between school, travel, and late game schedules.

SUPPLEMENT

Naps are a legit tool to supplement — not replace — night-time sleep, without hurting night-time sleep quality.

HIGH RISK

Early ice times, tournament travel, and school make junior players especially sleep-restricted — exactly when naps help most.

04 COACH & PLAYER ACTION STEPS

- 1

Schedule naps 20–45 min, between 1–4 PM on game days and heavy training days.
- 2

Build a 30–60 min buffer between wake-up and warm-up/competition.
- 3

Use naps to supplement poor/short night sleep — don't use as an excuse to stay up later.
- 4

Track how you feel post-nap (energy, mood, readiness) to find your personal sweet spot.

