

STRATEGIES TO KEEP AWAKEN (YCCC article)

*Thanks to Charlotte, KQ1F for digging up this article, and Fred,
K1VR for editing it.*

At the February 1988 meeting, YCCC member, Thomas Scott Johnson, KA1QXI (now NW1I, who now lives in Concord, MA), a physician at Brigham & Women's Hospital specializing in sleep problems, spoke on sleep deprivation strategies - or how to sleep four hours out of 48. This is the first program we can remember where the majority of those present took notes! He began by telling us that most people come to the Hospital's Sleep Clinic complaining that they have trouble sleeping, and it is interesting to speak before a group that wants to learn how to avoid or minimize sleep. After a brief overview of the physiology of sleep (90 minute cycling, REM sleep, and so forth), he gave his recommended schedule.

On Friday afternoon, have a reasonably good meal (but no alcohol) and take a three-hour nap, preferably from 4:30 to 7:30 PM EDT (for CQ WW Phone, which starts at 8 pm EDT), or 3:30 to 6:30, if the contest starts at 7 pm EST. When you get up, have some coffee. Eat no large meals during the contest, just snacks with high carbohydrates, low fat, and reasonable protein. Two hours before your normal waking time, take a 90-minute nap (this allows a full sleep cycle so that you will wake up refreshed), or sleep for 180 minutes. Then have another cup of coffee.

Only drink coffee when you awaken from your naps; otherwise you will have trouble falling asleep and will not awaken rested when you do sleep. The first afternoon of the contest, Saturday afternoon, schedule a 30-minute nap for sometime between 3 and 4 PM. Take another 90 or 180 minute nap the second morning. Optionally, take another nap the second afternoon, Sunday afternoon. [Ed. note: However, since you don't care what happens after the contest ends only a few hours later, you may load up on caffeine Sunday afternoon to avoid that Sunday afternoon nap.]

Avoid alcohol during the contest. Avoid heavy physical activity (such as tower or tree climbing) right before the contest since it promotes deep sleep. Keep the shack very brightly lit to keep you alert. When you do nap, do so in a darkened room.

Keep the shack warm, 72 to 74 degrees, since low body temperature encourages sleep.

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