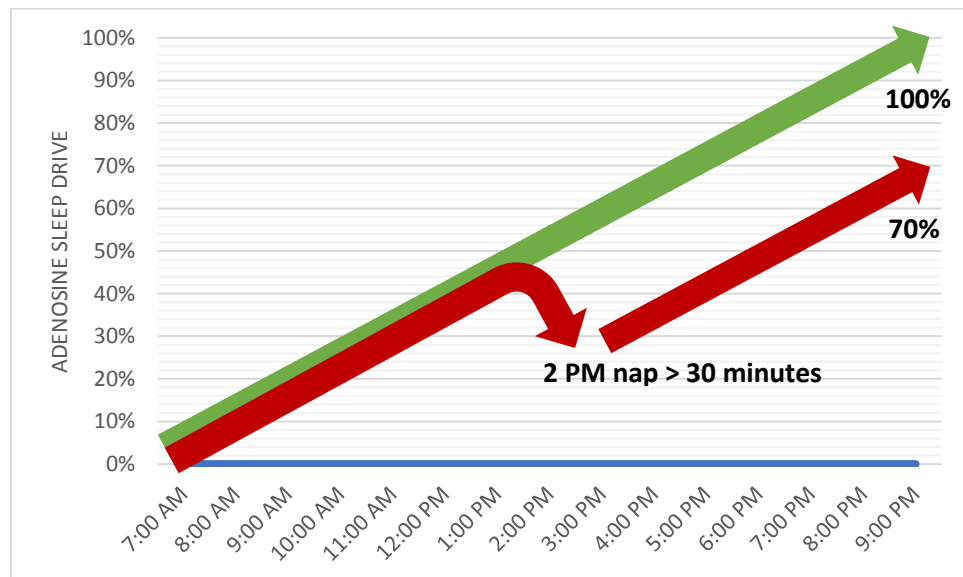


## Pearls: Healthy Sleep-Wake Cycle

The science of sleep gives us great insight into how nature builds up a healthy sleep-wake cycle for us. The knowledge can help us cultivate a healthy sleep-wake behavior.

1. ***Waking up is spontaneous in a healthy Sleep-Wake cycle.*** The wake up that follows a deep rejuvenating sleep is automatic. It does not require an alarm clock to jolt the brain awake. If you need an alarm clock to wake up every morning, it indicates that the Sleep-Wake cycle is not in natural harmony. There is either sleep deprivation or a lack of rejuvenating deep sleep.
2. ***A long wake up time in the morning is a sign of poor sleep.*** The individuals who sleep well do not linger in the bed, thinking long and hard about getting up. The vitality generated from good sleep commands them to leave the bed promptly. When a child or an adult takes a long time getting out of the bed, it is a signal that they are not getting enough restful sleep. The automatic wake up to prompt activity is a good indicator that the sleep was relaxing and rejuvenating.
3. ***Afternoon sleep is a bad idea for rejuvenating sleep.*** Brief afternoon naps of 30 minutes or less usually do not disrupt the adenosine sleep drive to kick start the sleeping engine at night. However, if the afternoon nap becomes an extended 1-2 hours of afternoon sleep, the adenosine sleep drive diminishes in intensity. That interferes with the onset of sleep. (See the picture below.)



***Afternoon Nap and Sleep Drive***

4. ***Be aware that most rejuvenating sleep occurs in the first half of the night.*** To understand this, see the section of the sleep cycle versus sleep quality below. Those who go to bed very late after 11 PM day after day are losing out on the deep rejuvenating sleep time.

5. ***How to reset the rejuvenating sleep cycle.*** A natural harmony between the homeostatic drive of adenosine and circadian drive of the hormone melatonin is the secret to a restful rejuvenating sleep. Take note that:

***“It is the spontaneous wake-up time in the morning which regulates the sleep onset at night, and not the time one decides to get into the bed. If you wake up early, you are naturally programmed to sleep early.”***

Therefore, if one wishes to set a regular pattern of rejuvenating sleep cycle, the first step is to set up the morning wake up time. To begin with, take the help of the alarm clock to wake up between 6-7 AM. Spend a few minutes in the morning, bright daylight or sunlight. That helps to initiate melatonin synthesis in the brain. Keep active the entire 16-hour day with no afternoon or other naps during the day. The daytime naps will weaken the adenosine drive of starting the engine of rejuvenating sleep. Take an hour or two to unwind the mind before sleep by disconnecting from digital devices. Read a book or listening to light music. Get into the bed at night only when feeling sleepy. When you begin waking spontaneously in the mornings without an alarm clock, you have reached the goal of reestablishing the natural sleep-wake cycle.



Every morning, praise the Lord!

### ***Alarm Clock Versus Natural Wake Up***

Photo source: Wordpress.com