

Ubersleep

Using Polyphasic Sleep Schedules TO
CUT YOUR Sleep Time by HALF (OR MORE!)

AND

DO ALL KINDS OF INTERESTING THINGS TO YOUR LIFE

by PureDoxyk

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Dedications

Like many projects, this book couldn't have happened without the direct or indirect help of a lot of people. This one measly page at the beginning will have to suffice to thank them all, though I hope they know that I know that it's woefully inadequate. If you should be in here, and I forgot you, I owe you a drink. ;)

For the Princess Psuke Bariah,

without whom none of this would ever have happened (at least not to me); my friend and co-crazy-person, who patiently woke me from my first thousand or so naps, and, just so we're clear, whose idea this whole thing was...

For St. John's College,

home of the most intense curriculum in all of bookwormdom, for being the kind of place where something like this almost *had* to happen...and for the professors there who didn't call the men in white, over this or all the rest of my craziness...

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For my daughter,

who tucks me in with a glint of revenge in her eyes...

And for my wonderful husband,

good god the crap you put up with.

Here's hoping you're interested in many more years of it!

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ORIGINAL COVER ART BY CONOR SULLIVAN, THANKS FOR A GREAT job!

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The Disclaimers: PLEASE READ THESE!

1. **THIS IS NOT SCIENCE.** There is little real scientific data on Polyphasic Sleep at the time of this writing. What you're reading here is the personal experience and collected research (mostly jotted on napkins) of one of the better-known experimenters with polyphasic schedules (me). I coined the term "Uberman's Sleep Schedule" and have lived on both the Uberman and Everyman schedules, as well as talked with, attempted to advise, and learned from many other people who showed interest in adapting to a polyphasic schedule. While it's all YMMV (Your Mileage May Vary) at this point, this is the best data I'm aware of at this moment. **Please take this as serious advice, which it is, but not as scientifically-validated fact, which it isn't.**
2. **SLEEP DEPRIVATION IS NOT HEALTHY.** Just as changing diets often means going through some hunger, changing sleep schedules, especially into a super-efficient (or at least restrictive) schedule, involves some sleep-starvation. In some cases, such as with Uberman, it can be quite extreme for a few days (like fasting, to keep up the food analogy). But even when the sleep dep isn't extreme, it's there, until you adapt fully to the new schedule. Like hunger, sleep deprivation won't kill you, or even hurt you, as long as it's temporary and you observe basic safety guidelines (which are discussed in detail in the chapter on Adaptation, and elsewhere). But, also like hunger, sleep deprivation is not a healthy state to be in for too long – it can have many detrimental effects over time. As more people become interested in polyphasic sleep, I'm hearing more cases of people being sleep deprived for months or even longer, as they make halfhearted attempts to adapt but keep oversleeping or fudging their schedules, resulting in a long, drawn-out period of low-to-mid-level sleep deprivation. *The point of polyphasic sleep is to GET THROUGH the adaptation period as quickly as possible, by making CONSISTENT changes to one's sleep schedule and sticking with them in spite of the initial tiredness.* If done correctly, the period of sleep deprivation is short and, I believe, totally safe. **If consistency is lacking, however, this kind of experimentation can have negative consequences.** I strongly urge everyone who may consider polyphasic sleep to think long and hard about whether you have the motivation and discipline to be consistent in spite of being extremely tired at first; and if you discover that you can't seem to keep to your new schedule long enough to adapt--you keep messing up, oversleeping, etc.--then *please stop* before you damage yourself. Re-establish a regular, normal sleeping schedule asap, and then, after a long "reset", you can try again if you feel it's wise. But please don't use polyphasic sleep as an excuse to sleep randomly, or try to stay awake for long periods and then crash and try it again. This kind of behavior is likely to be very bad for you. Please don't do it. Or at the very least, if you do, don't go telling people I gave you the idea!
3. **NOT FOR KIDS.** Those who are still experiencing high levels of physical and mental growth -- typically anyone under 18-20 years of age -- should not be messing with depriving their bodies of sleep or food, however temporarily. If this is you, please think a moment: You don't get a second shot at the growth period in your life, but you'll have decades and decades after it's done to mess about with things like polyphasic sleep, fasting, weird diets, etc. It doesn't take much to throw a serious monkey-wrench into your mental or physical development, and there's no fixing it if you do. If you're interested in polyphasic sleep now but you aren't old enough to safely attempt it, then I suggest you use the time to research and plan how you'd like it to work when you are old enough -- the extra planning will greatly increase your chances of success, so consider it an opportunity!

...Thank you for reading The Disclaimers. Now, on to the good stuff!

1. What is Polyphasic Sleep?

INTRODUCTION

Polyphasic sleep is sleeping in more than one "phase" or chunk, as opposed to "monophasic" sleep, which is what most people do – sleep in one big chunk at night.

Polyphasic sleep is not new! In fact, it's as old as it gets. Many animals are polyphasic, as are human beings...at first. Infants are polyphasic; they have to be trained to sleep at night, as many a frazzled parent knows. Besides "natural" polyphasers like infants and animals, different forms of polyphasic sleep have been used by groups of people over much of history. The most common case that I'm aware of is the soldier, who, unable to sleep for an extended period while behind enemy lines, is trained to take short naps, either at regular intervals or, if that's not possible, simply whenever he or she can. Sailors and pilots, scientists and explorers -- anyone working alone over an extended period of time -- often does the same thing.

It's well known already that, by taking short naps often, a person can sleep much less than what we consider "normal" and still function mostly without impairment, and that this can be maintained for a while without doing any damage. But what about over the long haul? What about sleeping polyphasically as a *lifestyle*? Can it be done – and if so, how? Which schedules work? Does it make you tired all the time, or do bad things to your memory, concentration, or health? And what are the psychological, and even social, effects of living on a polyphasic schedule?

These are questions I've been prodding at for a long time. I first slept on a polyphasic schedule for a little under six months in the year 1999, as an experiment. The results surprised me, so I ended up writing about my experience with what my co-conspirator and I dubbed "The Uberman Sleep Schedule". What I didn't know was that, at the time I wrote the article, there wasn't much other information out there about using polyphasic sleep schedules "in real life" as opposed to in extreme situations, and that interest in my success would be very high. In the years since then, many other people have adopted polyphasic schedules, and I have tested out a few others schedules as well. I've compiled the information I have on the schedules that work, their effects, the practical side of adapting to them and using them, and lots of tips and tricks for making polyphasic sleeping work, into this book.

This book is meant to be a resource for people who are curious about or would like to try sleeping polyphasically. Please note that I'm not a scientist, so while I'm reasonably certain that, for instance, there are no negative physical effects resulting from polyphasic sleep, I can't speak with the authority of controlled experimental research. My secondary goal in writing this book is to encourage the people who are equipped to carry out that kind of research to do so. I think polyphasic sleep can be a valuable thing, especially in modern times and for modern people, and I've gotten nothing but good from it. I sincerely hope that others will benefit from the information I've gathered here, and use it as a platform to learn more.

Some Terminology

Some language-conventions have already begun to take hold in the polyphasic world (the word "polyphasic" is one of them), and I will operate within the community's lingo¹ as far as I can without being confusing to a new reader. Here are some terms that you might see, here and elsewhere, in reference to polyphasic sleep:

Polyphasic: many-phases; refers to sleeping in several smaller chunks ("naps")

Monophasic: one-phase; refers to sleeping in one, usually nighttime, chunk

Equiphasic: any sleep schedule where the "chunks" are of equal length

Non-Equiphasic: any sleep schedule where the chunks are of unequal length (i.e. one sleep of a few hours and several short naps)

Core: in a non-equiphasic schedule, the longer sleeps are called "core naps"

Nap: a shorter sleep-chunk, usually understood to mean less than an hour. The majority of polyphasic naps are 20 minutes long, though some schedules use 30 minutes instead.

Uberman: refers to a specific, equiphasic, polyphasic schedule. Named by my friend and I when we first undertook polyphasic sleeping. It's a simple Nietzsche reference – we're both philosophy majors.²

Dymaxion: another equiphasic, polyphasic schedule, coined by the scientist Buckminster Fuller. Aside from my own experiences and those since, Dr. Fuller's Dymaxion experiment is the only documented case of a polyphasic schedule being adopted long-term. (It was a success, by his reporting.)

Everyman: refers to one of several non-equiphasic, polyphasic schedules

Polyphasers / Ubersleepers: people who sleep polyphasically (typically, even if they're not on the Uberman schedule per se; people on Everyman or Dymaxion are still called Ubersleepers.)

Monophasers / Hibernators: people who sleep monophasically. ;)

Adapting or Adjusting: The first 30 days minimum of any new polyphasic sleep schedule are the "adjustment period", the time during which the brain/body gets used to the new schedule. Sleep deprivation is normal during this period, and strict adherence to the new schedule is of utmost importance. The experience of sleeping polyphasically after the adaptation period is significantly different than it is during adaptation!

1 Some of this "lingo" is not pure – for instance, the term "polyphasic sleep" as originally coined by Dr. Stampi would not normally include the Everyman Sleep Schedule in its definition. However, the community widely recognizes Everyman as a polyphasic schedule. For simplicity's sake, I've stuck with what the community of polyphasers, and those interested in polyphasic sleep, typically mean by their jargon, rather than textbook definitions (where there are any).

2 We're also both women, so though Nietzsche's original text (predictably) used the masculine *der Übermensch*, the Uberman Sleep Schedule is definitely a *das Übermensch*, a gender-neutral. Occasionally I/we get accused of naming the central polyphasic schedule in a sexist (patriarchal) fashion, and then one of us has to point out that, translated without its *der/das/die*, the word Uberman by itself has no gender. It's not our fault that the English for *mensch* (person) is *man*. Also, ümlauts are a pain to type, so we leave them out. Translating to American includes translating the tendency to take shortcuts. ;)

HISTORY & KNOWN APPLICATIONS

Besides soldiers and infants and animals generally, there have been lots of people that history speculates were polyphasic sleepers, and a few that we know were. Unfortunately, real data is scarce in most circumstances.

There is a small culture of forest-dwellers known as the "Piraha" who, according to the reports of (unfortunately, it seems just one) scientist, sleep for between 20 minutes and 2 hours at a time. It's possible that, because they are a hunting culture (or for another reason), they've adapted to sleeping polyphasically in order to maximize alert-time, much the way some animals do. (It's also possible, as someone helpfully pointed out, that they were waking up all the time in order to keep an eye on the crazy scientist in their midst.)

Probably the most pervasive historical attribution is to Leonardo Da Vinci. When I first heard about polyphasic sleep, it was attached to Da Vinci's name, and even though there isn't any actual historical evidence that I've been able to find to support the assertion that Da Vinci was polyphasic, he's not such an odd avatar for polyphasic sleep. The man was known for being up at all hours, and for getting an unbelievable amount of work done in an almost ridiculous number of categories. That sounds like a polyphaser to me!

Specifically, the traits Da Vinci had are accurate representations of someone on the schedule we called *Uberman*. Long before I did my experiment, Dr. Claude Stampi – pretty much the only person to do a real study on the "all naps" polyphasic schedule – had called the schedule "Da Vinci sleep" in his book *"Why We Nap"*³.

Other historical attributions abound, as well, and they include Ben Franklin, Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison and many more people. And though there's no hard evidence of fact that these men were polyphasic sleepers, reading about their lives, it's easy (for someone familiar with polyphasic sleep) to see why they might have gotten labeled as polyphasic, or why someone might have thought they were. And perhaps they really were after all; or perhaps they were just weird sleepers without any specific schedule, or with a schedule they made up all by themselves that doesn't fit any of the types and categories that we've figured out so far. (Many of them were known for inventing things, after all.)

There is one great historical figure that we do know for a fact was polyphasic, at least for a few years, and that's Buckminster Fuller, the scientist⁴. Dr. Fuller devised a schedule of 30-minute naps at regular intervals (equiphasic) and called it the Dymaxion schedule (he used the word Dymaxion to name many things which he considered ideal and efficient). He lived on his Dymaxion schedule for two years, during which he kept his usual (astonishing) amount of notes and records. Significantly, Dr. Fuller was seen by at least one physician while living on his Dymaxion schedule, and pronounced "sound as a nut". He also reported feeling more rested and energetic than he had in his whole life, which may sound odd, but I experienced the same thing on the Uberman schedule, as have many others by now.⁵

MODERN RESEARCH

Far less has been done in the realm of modern scientific research of polyphasic sleeping than I and many others would like to see. The latest research was conducted by Dr. Claudio Stampi, founder of

3 *Why We Nap*, ed. Claudio Stampi, Birkhäuser Boston, 1990.

4 An absolutely fascinating figure, whom I encourage everyone to read up on if they like fascinating people.

5 On the Everyman schedule, which will be discussed in detail later, I simply feel rested, normal, except that I have more time available to me. I tend to refer to the unique energizing effect of Uberman / Dymaxion as "euphoria".

the Chronobiology Research Institute in Boston, and avid sailor. Dr. Stampi's nap-research appears to have been motivated by his love of sailing, which led him to notice how lone sailors often successfully trade their monophasic schedules for ones that center around many short naps, and to study the effects of making that switch. He's written articles on polyphasic sleep in sailors, as well as a book containing some of the foremost research on napping, *Why We Nap*, published in 1992. (Mind you, that means that the newest research we know about was conducted seven years before my experiment. Yikes.)

That book is an interesting, if grueling, look at the physiology of sleep, and short sleeps specifically, but unfortunately a) it's out of print and expensive, b) it's very scientific, and not an easy read for laypersons, and c) the experiment using "Da Vinci sleep" (an Uberman-like equiphasic schedule) is short and, from the perspective of someone interested in sleeping polyphasically long-term, incomplete. All it proves, from our perspective, is that "adjustment" is possible, by showing that a subject put on the "Da Vinci" schedule experienced a drop in mental performance, but then recovered all of it when the initial adaptation period had passed. This is an important thing to know, for those trying to prove that polyphasic sleep isn't damaging to adjust to, but it leaves a lot of unanswered questions. For instance:

- A subject was found who was willing to try sleeping only in 6 30-minute blocks, with no longer sleep period. In the modern parlance, this is usually (but not always) associated with the Dymaxion schedule; Uberman, properly speaking, is generally accepted to involve 20 minute naps, not 30.⁶ This may be a trivial difference, but many people would like to know if the more commonly-used shorter nap would work as well or better. Many people believe that it does (myself included).
- The subject adjusted to the new schedule gradually, by replacing regular sleep with naps over a period of time. I and others who adopt Uberman or Dymaxion have tended to go for it all at once. It would be nice to know if one method is easier or more efficacious than the other. (See the Appendices for more information on Gradual Adaptation.)
- The subject wasn't really "in control" of the sleep schedule; he was being told by the researcher how to sleep and when, including being given a day to sleep "at will". Since psychology plays such a major role in being able to wake up and stay awake, one wonders how the experiment would have differed if the subject was simply given the schedule and told to stick to it.
- The experiment was relatively short in duration, raising the question that's non-scientifically answered here: Can polyphasic sleep work as a real-life sleep schedule, in the long term, including normal activities? And what are the long-term effects and side-effects of this type of schedule?
- And, of course, this was an experiment with one subject. It shows that it's possible to adapt, but not why, or what major factors are involved. Knowing what traits make it easier, or harder, to adopt a polyphasic schedule could be very useful to a lot of people!

When I planned my second adaptation in 2006, one of the things I did to prepare was to contact several local sleep clinics and sleep-research-department heads, and offer myself as a guinea pig if anybody wanted to study the adaptation process. I was surprised that no-one did, but again, I hope that that will change. (And I continue to chase leads in this area today, in the hope that eventually more research will be done. Unfortunately my own life now -- job, kid, school -- makes it impossible for me to check into a sleep clinic for a long study (not that anybody's asked me to yet), but I'm sure there are polyphasers who'd be willing.)

Additional research is important, I believe. Because while many people are still discussing how possible and feasible and healthy polyphasic sleep is, there's no doubt that the alternative schedules are relevant today.

⁶ Oddly enough, all the data I've gathered from my experiments and others' points to a 20-minute nap being more refreshing than 30 minutes. Most Ubersleepers experiment a bit with the exact duration of the naps, but the general consensus is that less than 15 minutes is too little, and more than 25 is too much. Some people do sleep 30 minutes, but they're the minority. I usually sleep 18-20 minutes for a nap; longer than that and I wake more tired.

MODERN RELEVANCE

The future is a tricky thing. Perhaps the trickiest thing about it is deciding whether we, as people, are in control of our destiny or not. We seem alternately helpless and all-powerful with regard to how we steer the development of our world.

On the one hand, sleep seems to already be under attack in many places, where rapid growth and digital-industrial economies are plowing over anything that gets in the way of maximum (short-term) efficiency. The physical downtime that people need should be protected from exploitation by a system eager to squeeze every dollar from every laborer...Even I worry that some greedy sonofa___ is going to use polyphasic sleep as an excuse to invent the 20-hour workday.

On the other hand, the 24-hour society, properly envisioned, allows greater freedom for individuals to pursue a wider selection of lifestyles. Reducing the amount of sleep people need, if it can be done safely and with due respect for individual rights, seems like it could be a huge benefit to most busy, modern people. Like me, they could gain time for hobbies and relaxation that they might not otherwise have, and restore the balance that's been lost by dedicating most of everyone's entire waking day to work. I'm sure someone will say that to be so busy that you have to cut into your night's sleep to have any free time is symptomatic of terrible things overall, and shouldn't be encouraged. That's not a stupid argument to make: Sleeping monophasically, it's been shown that people need a certain amount of sleep, and simply not getting it will definitely impact your health and performance. I know *tons* of adults who do that⁷, and I always thought it was stupid. You don't neglect to maintain your car right before you drive the Cannonball Run. Why would you neglect your body when you most need it to function well, because you're really busy? That's true of not sleeping enough; I totally agree. But what if you could sleep *less*, but still sleep *enough*?

It's a common misconception that polyphasic sleep means being sleep deprived, but common or not, it's still a misconception. Sleep deprivation is a phase that must be gotten through in order to adapt to a polyphasic schedule -- just like hunger is a phase that must be gotten through in order to adapt to a strict diet. Being on a polyphasic schedule is *not* supposed to mean being sleep-deprived, nor does it, for the people who are currently successfully adjusted, like myself.

It's already known that polyphasic sleep "works" -- that dividing up sleep-periods differently can improve the *efficiency* of sleep, allowing less overall sleep to provide adequate rest while maintaining (or even improving) performance and health. Sailors and soldiers, as I've mentioned, already use polyphasic schedules frequently when it's inconvenient or impossible to sleep many hours at a time, and they're able to perform well enough to fly planes, steer boats, and engage in combat and reconnaissance activities. If sleeping polyphasically involved a systemic loss in performance, I don't think the military or the long-distance travel/racing communities would recommend it! There's also evidence, however anecdotal, that ancient humankind may have used polyphasic sleep during times of food-shortage or especially bad weather, to gain an edge in hunting or survival ability where one was badly needed. I find none of this surprising; after all, a quick look at the animal kingdom shows that it's not at all unnatural to sleep based on the needs of one's surroundings, and yes, many animals are polyphasic, too.

The question being asked in this book is whether napping can be more than a stop-gap measure; whether it makes a good "default" schedule over the long-term. **Can you sleep polyphasically – taking naps throughout the day, and cutting your total sleep time to four or less hours per 24 – and get away with it for many months, or years?** And what would such a lifestyle involve?

⁷ Kids, including teenagers, are usually smarter. They may want to stay up late, but then they also want to sleep until noon, as any sane person would. :)

I'm going on one and a half years of uninterrupted⁸ polyphasic sleep (I'll explain my schedule and history in the next section) as I write this, and I'm not the only successful long-term adapter, though there certainly aren't a flood of us yet. It's also likely that, if polyphasic sleeping "catches on", it'll remain a minority undertaking. Still, the longer I continue to enjoy and benefit from my polyphasic lifestyle with no major negative effects, the neater an idea it seems. So let's take a closer look at how it works!

⁸ Uninterrupted except for periods of minor illness, travel or other scheduling shake-ups, which I'll describe in more detail later. The periods of being "off my schedule" have never exceeded one week, and there have been relatively few of them. Also, even though I'll talk more about it later, I want to point out right up front that every single time I "fell off" my polyphasic schedule, I experienced no "crash" -- no long recovery sleep -- which would have indicated that the polyphasic sleeping was causing me to build up a sleep debt.

11. Polyphasic Schedules in Detail

BEGINNING AT THE BEGINNING: The UBERMAN Sleep Schedule

Ah, Uberman. Fond memories, for me.

Let's not mince words – I was one of those crazy experimenter types in college. If there was a physical or psychological boundary in me, I was messing with it, feeling it out, looking for give. ...To an extent, I'm still like that. I just have a little less leeway to get really strange about it now. (I look forward to old age, which I'm told allows one to get away with being strange again.)

Of course, experimenting with sleep is hardly a unique undertaking for college students. In my case, I was motivated by more than just curiosity, though – I had a *terrible* time sleeping, and I was looking for a way out. I've always been a computer geek and thus had neck problems, and virtually any way I slept, if I did it for as long as I needed in order to feel rested, would mean waking up in a ball of crackly pain. Plus, I've always needed a lot of sleep -- the "8 hours" that we call the adult average is, unsurprisingly, shorthand for "7-9 hours", and I was a nine-hour person. Less than that and I felt like somebody'd used me to clean a restaurant floor. And needless to say, that was becoming more and more inconvenient, the older and busier I got.

I also have a rather intimate history with depression⁹, and being by myself and away from my hometown for the first time did really funny things to my head – among which was trashing my ability to sleep. I had bouts of insomnia that could last a week or more; I had near-constant nightmares, night terrors, sleep-walking episodes, recurring incidents of sleep paralysis and choking and even wrecking my room in the middle of dreaming...fun fun fun. So while, in my experiments, I was partially doing things like playing "How Long Can I Go Without Sleep On Purpose?" because they were interesting, I was also desperately trying to jog my mind/body into behaving itself so that I could rest.

The original Uberman attempt was directly related to all this. It was some weeks after my big no-sleep-at-all experiment (I got just past 82 hours before my safety-buddy put the hammer down and ended that experiment), and I was having the worst and weirdest insomnia bout ever. For almost two weeks, I couldn't sleep more than about 20 minutes at a time – I would fall asleep normally, and then wake up, sometimes in a state of paralysis¹⁰, and be unable to go back to sleep for many hours. Sometimes I would give up and get up, and other times I would lie miserably in bed for a few hours, bored out of my skull, listening to the minutes tick away. It was not fun, and I was desperate for a way out, but nothing was working -- music, melatonin, exercise; I'd tried whatever I could think of short of drugs, and I didn't want to cross that line into medicating myself in order to get restful sleep. My friend, who'd been my safety-buddy during previous experiments and pretty much hung out with me constantly anyway, was the one who suggested the sleep schedule she'd read about somewhere that involved only sleeping for 20 minutes at a time anyway, every four hours, around the clock. ("I think Da Vinci did it", was about the extent of

⁹ Because it bears on the experiment(s) and on polyphasic sleep, I'll add that I was not, at the time of these first experiments or at any time since then, on psychiatric medication. I've found that holistic methods and lifestyle adjustments work better for me. ;)

¹⁰ Actually, it was more like my body was asleep, but my mind wasn't. I could move if I wanted to, but if I did I would "wake up" -- as long as I laid still, though, I could feel that my body was totally relaxed and "under". But my mind was wide awake. Yeah, it was really weird, and if it hadn't been interfering with any sort of normal sleep, I might have thought it was cool! Mostly I just got bored and frustrated after laying there mentally awake for a while, and got up, exhausted, to do something else.

the information and prior research we had. We think the article she might have read was one published in an old issue of Time magazine, about Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion experiment.) I would have to go to sleep a lot, but waking up after 20 minutes would become an advantage, rather than an exhausting detriment.

It sounded like the perfect solution at the time, but looking back, I still think it's amazing that it actually *was*. My friend even gamely offered to try the schedule with me, both as a "control", scientifically speaking, and so that I wouldn't die of boredom and would have help sticking to it. We both agreed that if it was going to work, it needed to be adhered to with the utmost strictness at first, and that's exactly what we did. Naps happened at precise times, and we called each other immediately upon waking (if we weren't together anyway). To my eternal chagrin, I did not keep a careful log of the transition that we underwent, but what I seem to remember clearly does not contradict what others have experienced in the same situation.

To put it bluntly – we'll get into the adaptation process more specifically in Chapter Four – what we experienced was about four days of mind-blowing sleep deprivation. Well, the first day wasn't so bad, of course. Really the third and fourth days were the worst, and after that, it began to get easier. (But those third and fourth days seemed to last *cons!*) I really, honestly can say that I've never been through anything like those days of extreme sleep-dep, nor have I done very much in my life that impressed me as much as I was impressed when we managed to get through that period without oversleeping. It really felt like doing the impossible! And thankfully, it was short: after a week, it wasn't much harder to wake up than getting up early on a normal morning, and after two weeks, it wasn't hard at all. After that point, all traces of tiredness quickly vanished, and we were full of energy and—here's a strange word but it describes us well—*vim*.

And for several months thereafter, things only got better. We were sleeping a total of two hours every twenty-four, a feat which everyone readily agreed was absolutely insane and impossible, and yet it was undeniably working. On a campus of about five hundred people total, you can't fool everyone into thinking that you're rested all the time when you're not, and you certainly can't fake whether or not you're up all night! We had a lot of amazed observers (as well as a lot of people screaming for us to stop, especially in the beginning -- sleep deprivation doesn't make you look so good). For a short while, we also had followers: about fifteen other people, total, attempted to adapt to the schedule. They all failed -- but my friend and I did not. The funny thing is, that ratio, insofar as I can tell with nothing but my intuition to guide me, is pretty close to the average fail-rate for adaptation to a polyphasic schedule. (You'd think that Uberman would have a higher failure rate, but I've noticed that all it seems to really have is more people who drop out within the first week. The "easier" schedules still lose people, but since the first week isn't so bad, they often don't lose them until a few weeks in.)

What is the Uberman Sleep Schedule?

- The original polyphasic schedule: "Equihexiphasic" in technical terms.
- Very similar to what's known about Dr. Fuller's Dymaxion schedule
- 20 minute naps - 15 minutes minimum, 25 minutes maximum; 30 minutes is sometimes used but seems to be less effective
- Every four hours - must be precise (not more than 10-15 minutes variation; preferably little or no variation on a regular basis)
- No longer naps or "sleeps"
- Adjustment is very difficult for the first week or so; takes about 30 days to become fully adjusted
- mistakes during adjustment set back adaptation noticeably
- Schedule is relatively strict even after adjustment
- Time-dilation is often very noticeable; may have difficulty keeping track of days
- Many adherents have reported feelings of euphoria, heightened awareness, mental clarity, and other psychological effects
- Physical effects reported (post-adaptation) have included increased energy, weight loss, weight gain, dryness or tiredness of the eyes...most seem to be related to lifestyle while polyphasic, rather than the schedule itself; no purely-Uberman-related physical effects are known to the author

Try to imagine what it was like for us when this worked. A normal day¹¹, as I remember it, consisted of an 8:00 a.m. nap before class; classes (or work -- we both worked part time) through the morning, a nap at noon (which often made eating lunch difficult or impossible, but we learned to compensate); classes/work in the afternoon, nap at 4:00p.m.; more classes/work (or theatre, or another of the activities we often volunteered for) in the late-afternoon, nap at 8:00 p.m.; more activities or hanging out with friends (and sometimes classes) in the evening, nap at midnight; then either more friends-and-parties or quiet time (I used to write or work on computers at night a lot), nap at 4:00 a.m.; and then we'd get up and go study together at the all-night Denny's until it was time for our 8:00 a.m. nap.

That means we were up and moving for 22 hours every day. We worked. We took over 20 credit-hours each of classes. We hung out with people every day; we went to almost every party and event (and roleplaying game, *cough nerds cough*) that we wanted to. We got good grades (studying 3-4 hours every day will do that), our dorms/apartments were sometimes hilariously clean, we had time for all our hobbies (well, most of them), and *we were never tired*. From our perspective, it felt like you never got a *chance* to be tired, since once you woke up, it was only three hours and forty minutes until it was time to go back to sleep!

And that's why we, philosophy students as we were, chose to call the schedule "the Uberman's Sleep Schedule". It really wasn't because it was so hard to adjust to -- it was mostly because of the superhuman ability to get things done that the schedule imparted. We kept saying to each other, "I feel like Superman!"

Anyway, at the end of that year, I left school and got a job, and dropped my nifty sleep schedule due to difficulties working it into the whole 9-5 framework. (It is still true, in every case that I know, that Uberman just doesn't play nice with regular full-time jobs, unfortunate as that is.) I remember crying the first night I slept all night. (Actually, I slept about three hours; the next night I slept six, and then I was back to eight/nine. And amazingly, I did not experience a return of the insomnia/nightmares/etc problem at all.)

What that experience gave me, unsurprisingly, was a very positive view of this schedule. Whenever I talked about it later on, I preached my guts out (and mostly just got looked at funny). But I was soon to learn that it wasn't all peaches and roses, because about six years later, I would land a job that had a little more flexibility, and of course one of the first things on my mind was getting my precious Uberman schedule back¹²...

BEING A GROWNUP: THE EVERYMAN SCHEDULE

Ah, right, but what had happened in those six years? Well, first of all, I'd gotten into a line of work that was significantly more demanding than being a gopher for the Student Activities Department; and second of all, I'd had a child. Both of those things had an impact I hadn't expected, and that was to make it nearly impossible to lay down for a nap *exactly* every four hours (or stay asleep for a whole 20 minutes). In college, my schedule was pretty regular, and my obligations relatively forgiving; if I had to bow out of a theatre rehearsal for a few minutes, or tell work to hang on a sec, it wasn't a big deal; my only major time-related obligations were classes, and those conveniently happened in such a way as to allow a short break every four hours.

11 It's hard to think about "days" when you don't sleep at night; our lives felt like one long unwinding day, an effect I discuss in more detail in the "Psychology & Sociology" section.

12 Actually, I tried to get it back one other time, shortly after my daughter was born, when I wasn't sleeping for crap anyway. Needless to say, it didn't work -- she wouldn't let me nap, and I was too tired all the time already to be anywhere near able to handle the adjustment. I think I lasted two days. ;)

Back then, I thought I was napping so regularly because it was easier, and because psychologically it made sticking with my weird schedule a lot simpler. What I came to realize is that getting those naps as on-time as possible is not in any way optional with Uberman. Living by the minute-hand of my watch was part of the price to be paid for sleeping only two hours a day. And it wasn't bad, really; it hardly ever bothered me at all, especially since the naps were so short, the interruptions were barely noticeable.

After college, though, I had phone calls I couldn't put down, meetings that wouldn't let me bow out or be late, and most importantly, a walking, talking, very *demanding* bundle of joy who certainly couldn't be left alone for twenty minutes. I also, for a while there, had a job that simply would not allow sleep anywhere within a 9 or 10 hour block of time. (Several attempts have been made to develop a polyphasic schedule that doesn't require interrupting a long workday; I'm sorry to report that I don't know of any yet that work. More on the derivation of new types of polyphasic schedule later, though.)

But then, a few years later, I realized that things had changed. My daughter was old enough to be watched by someone else during my naptime; and my job changed to one with enough managerial power to let me take naps. (All it really took was having enough voice in the company for someone to hear me when I explained that one hour a day (each nap takes about 30 minutes in real-time away from my desk) wasn't more than most smokers (and even non-smokers) took in "breaks", and that if I came in an hour earlier I could make up for it anyway. Other than getting some odd looks, it hasn't caused any problems at my current job -- in fact, the refreshing breaks seem to help my productivity a lot. Nothing chases away that "afternoon slump" like a quick nap!)

Uberman still wouldn't work, though: my job is flexible enough to manage to get naps within roughly the right hour-or-two-long bracket, but no way can I get to any kind of precision in a hectic office environment. (Looking back, I wish I'd known that before I spent three weeks trying to adjust to Uberman in 2006...that was not fun!) However, my failure to get my precious sleeping schedule back had an upside: People had been talking to me for a while about another possible version of the schedule, one that involved a longer nap at night and was supposedly easier to modify.

What is the Everyman Sleep Schedule?

- A variation on Uberman that developed in the early 2000's. "Non-equiphasic" in technical terms.
- Most common version involves one 3-hour "core nap" at night plus three 20-minute naps spaced throughout the day. Some adherents report needing 2 naps instead, or four.
- Additional variants exist that seem to work, such as 1.5 hour core + 4 naps, and 4.5 hour core + 2 naps.
- Naps should be relatively evenly spaced, but need not be equidistant-- most people find they can stay up a little longer between two of the daytime naps than the others, and it doesn't seem to matter as long as the overall schedule is regular, and distance between naps doesn't exceed 6 or so hours
- Precision is still needed during adaptation (abt. 60 days), but afterwards, naps can be moved as much as one hour in either direction on a daily basis with no apparent negative effects
- Adjustment is not as difficult at first as with Uberman; however, it seems to take 2-3 months to become adjusted compared to Uberman's 30 days, and one is less tired, but tired for longer than with the Uberman adaptation
- Mistakes during adjustment are still deleterious, but not as much as with Uberman; mistakes after adjustment tend to be easier to recover from (some users even sleep in regularly, such as once per week, and still keep to their schedules with little or no tiredness)
- Time-dilation is present but usually minor; most users can keep track of days without taking extra measures
- Euphoria, heightened awareness and other psychological effects are very mild or absent
- No physical effects reported that do not seem to be obviously caused by lifestyle (i.e. spending huge amounts of time in front of the computer) rather than the sleep schedule.

I scoffed at first. The *reason* Uberman worked, I thought, was its perfectly symmetrical and rhythmical nature -- taking a "long nap" was just a cop-out and bound to make adjusting impossible. Thankfully, several people insisted that I try it before I condemn it totally, and really, I couldn't think of another option and was heartbroken at the thought of being monophasic (*possibly forever!*). So I tried it.

That was in July 2006. As I sit here writing this, I've been living on (what I could *not* resist calling) the Everyman schedule for one year and ten months. I am not tired on a daily basis, or I should say, I experience tiredness during waking periods much less often than I did while I was monophasic¹³, and I have 20 hours of usable waking time during the week¹⁴. I have had my chiropractor (who is my regular, I'm-not-sick doctor) doing checkups on me, including blood pressure and heart rate, since I started the schedule; everything is normal.¹⁵

So Which is Better?

I find that while the majority of people are *interested* in the Uberman Sleep Schedule up front, many more people actually wind up doing the Everyman schedule. This isn't at all hard to understand, since most people have jobs and/or families or other responsibilities that they can't sacrifice to a draconian sleep-schedule, no matter how amazingly cool it is. And I don't want to discount the view that Everyman is an "inferior" schedule to Uberman -- in many ways, it is. It doesn't produce the "feeling of being Superman" to have just a few extra hours of time available per day. And it's lacking most of the cool psychological effects of Uberman. It doesn't *feel* the same to be on Everyman as Uberman¹⁶. Because of that, to me and others, it sometimes seems that Uberman is qualitatively different, in a class all its own; some people call Uberman "pure" polyphasic, and I don't object to that either. Everyman is a compromise, that gives a person some extra time while letting them retain some flexibility -- at the cost of some efficiency. I'm not "never tired" on my Everyman schedule like I was on Uberman, though I am tired significantly less often than I ever was while being monophasic. I sometimes feel energetic and "full of vim" in ways that I think I can attribute to my Everyman schedule, but it's a trickle compared to the feeling of being on Uberman. Everyman is completely worth it and I'm very grateful to be able to use it to make my life better -- which it does -- but, in all seriousness, if I could get my Uberman schedule back, I wouldn't hesitate to.

Uberman and Everyman are, for now, the schedules most used by polyphasic sleepers. There are other polyphasic schedules that get attention here and there, some of which seem to work. Let's cover them, and what the "formula" is, if there is one, for sleeping polyphasically.

Other Schedules (The "Formula")

I'll confess, I was surprised when people began letting me know that they seemed to have discovered a formula of sorts for developing a polyphasic schedule.¹⁷ Truth be told, I'm hesitant to talk about it, because one of my goals in communicating with the public about polyphasic sleep has been to

13 I'm not usually tired during a typical day, but if a nap gets moved too far or missed, I'll yet yawny, obviously.

14 It's sometimes (not always) a couple hours less on one of the weekend days, when I'll take a longer core or a longer nap during the day if I'm feeling lazy and have the time to spare. *Please note*, though, I couldn't have done this before I'd been on a strict schedule long enough to adapt fully. The extra sleep won't bother me as long as it doesn't happen more than once -- two or more days in a row, though, and sleeping extra will begin to make me tired at night.

15 Naturally, everything from my general appearance of health to my reaction times and mental performance was somewhat negatively impacted during the adjustment period -- this is a normal result of sleep deprivation. However, within a few weeks everything was back to normal, and has been since.

16 And, I gather, Dymaxion, which seems more like Uberman in its effects and how it feels.

17 Which just goes to show, for every crackpot deviant on the Internet, there are at least one and a half closet geniuses. What the half a genius is there for, I'm not sure, but I bet there's a web-forum for them somewhere.

discourage unsafe behavior; and experimenting with different schedule-types, if you're not already a seasoned polyphaser and moreover, very careful with yourself, is definitely unwise, if not outright unsafe. I urge everyone, if you've never done polyphasic sleep and you're interested in it, start with a *known good* schedule like Everyman or Uberman, and don't experiment further until you're familiar with what polyphasic sleep is like. To do otherwise is to risk messing up your existing sleep schedule but good, without having a workable one to replace it with.

However, I'm not the type to outright withhold information, so here's what I know about the Formula.

- Naps of 20 minutes seem to be more efficient than longer or shorter naps;
- "Core naps" or long sleeps that happen in multiples of 90 minutes also seem to be easier to wake from and provide better rest, though 45-minute intervals or multiples of them have also been suggested;
- Tiredness and decreased performance seem to set in once a polyphaser has been awake more than 6 hours, no matter how long the nap prior to that waking period was;
- A 90-minute core sleep seems to take the place of about (not exactly) one and a half 20-minute naps.

Thus, a very rough outline of "the formula" would look like:

NAPS.....CORE
6.....0 (Uberman)
4-5.....90 min (1.5-hour Everyman)
3-4.....3 hr (3-hour or "standard" Everyman)
2.....4.5 hr (4.5-hour Everyman)
1.....6 hr (biphasic)

A note about that last one: Taking one mid-afternoon nap and sleeping a long core at night is a well-known sleep schedule that works. Polyphasers tend to call it "biphasic", but most people know it as the habit of "taking a siesta", widely used in several societies. A siesta nap, however, is often from 45 to 120 minutes long; and adherents sleep anywhere from 4 to 7 hours at night while doing it. I suspect this is because the nap has to be enough to keep one awake for most of a day (i.e. the 6-1 schedule "breaks the rule" about being awake more than 6 hours). Biphasic is a special type of schedule, so we give it its own category for the most part. It's also special in that it's widely known to work, and there's even some evidence that it's healthier than monophasic sleep!

As to sleeping 6 hours at night with one 20-minute nap, I suspect this would not be sustainable in the long run, due to breaking the 6-hour-waking-period rule. But it's used by polyphasers, not infrequently, as a one-shot: I do it when the world messes with me and I only get one nap; I know that if I sleep 6 hours that night, I won't be a zombie in the morning. It's also what I do when I'm feeling lazy, have the time, and just want to sleep in – it's my analog of the monophasic "crashing until noon on a Saturday morning". I sometimes also do it when I'm sick – like I said, it's "sleeping way in" for me; with very few exceptions, six hours is the absolute longest I can sleep, and I'm quite habituated to polyphasic sleep by now, so no matter how long I sleep at night, I can't really go all day without at least one nap. But I'm not aware of anyone who actually does that schedule as a long-term thing.

Another thing about my use of this schedule is that, if I sleep 6 hours, I *can* take 1 nap, but I prefer two. (I am "good and polyphasic" now, and I have trouble staying awake longer than 6 hours or so without a nap, no matter how long I've slept. I also can't really sleep 45 minutes like a biphaser would; I wake fairly automatically after 20 minutes now.) However, the number of naps needed has some variance, as you can see from the Formula. This is analogous to the "7-9" hours of sleep

that constitutes the typical Adult 8 Hours...some people tend to need more sleep and some less. I take three naps on my Everyman schedule successfully, but if I can get a fourth, I'll take it, and when I do 1.5-hour Everyman, I like to have five naps -- I'm just one of the people who sleeps a lot. (Ironic, isn't it?)

Regarding substitutions such as the above, *some* polyphasers seem to be able to comfortably switch between the types of schedule listed above -- as one-offs, as long as one of them is the regular schedule, and that one is kept as strictly as possible for the most part. This generally works for Everyman sleepers much better than Uberman sleepers; but it doesn't work for all Everyman sleepers either -- for some people, messing up the schedule is messing up the schedule, and means either being tired while re-adjusting to the correct schedule, or falling back into monophasic sleep¹⁸. For my part, as long as I have a good 5-6 days a week of my usual 3-hour Everyman schedule with no major shakeups, substitutions don't seem to bother me at all. I will occasionally sleep 4.5 hours at night when I've missed one nap during the day, or sleep a full 6 hours on a weekend just for fun. As long as I get the appropriate daytime naps, I don't seem to suffer any ill effects from the substitutions. If things are crazy or crisis-y, I will occasionally do a day of 1.5-hour Everyman, or even Uberman, with little more than a few yawns and a coffee. So they seem to be interchangeable for me, as long as it's not very often.

The important thing to remember about the schedule "formula" is that it's still in its infancy, and represents little more than a collective educated guess. When you're choosing a schedule, keep the formula in mind, but also remember that only Uberman/Dymaxion and 3-hour Everyman have been actually shown to work in real people over the long haul. Start with one of those, and if you need to modify, do it carefully and slowly, **respecting always the fact that your body needs a consistent schedule in order to be healthy.** ...But we'll get more into choosing and modifying schedules later. First things first:

¹⁸ I no longer seem inclined to "fall back" into monophasic sleeping, ever since after about a year of polyphasic -- but monophasic sleep is a habit you've had for a long time, probably, so the tendency to fall back to it will be there for quite a while.

III. The Big Question: Should You Be Polyphasic?

WANTING TO

There are people in the world who have no interest in sleeping less.¹⁹ But the experience of being alive (what we call "having time") is, after all, the most basic and fundamental currency of our lives: If we had nothing else in the world, we would still find it precious. Giving someone more "experience of aliveness" is akin to extending their lifespan; it's no small gift to be conscious for four hours more every day than you used to be. That comes to 60.8 days more living per year, hey. Two months! That means that every six years, you've gained a year. And if you're on Uberman, gaining about six extra hours a day, you get 91.25 extra days -- a whole extra quarter of a year.²⁰ You gain an extra year of wake-time every four years, which means that if you did Uberman for 20 years, you'd be five years more experienced in waking life than the monophasic people your age. Weird, isn't it?

Of course, this is not *extra time* in the physical sense; you're not really going to live longer from being polyphasic²¹. And philosophically, a good argument can be made that sleep may be just as important to the experience of living as being awake (though it'd be an argument glaringly lacking in evidence). I'm not of the opinion that sleep is evil²², or wrong, or stupid; only that it's not as good a use of one's life-time as being awake is. If it's possible to be awake more without incurring some other big penalty (like illness), then why wouldn't one want to do it? And in that, at least half the people I talk to seem to agree with me, and want to do it too.

BEING THE RIGHT PERSON

"Should I adopt a polyphasic schedule?" is one of the most frequent questions I get. It's usually accompanied by a "but", as in, "I want to be polyphasic but--". Since wanting to is the first step, we'll start with that and move on to the "buts" later.

Wanting to in the philosophical sense I just spoke about isn't enough. Philosophically speaking, we all probably "want" to be and do lots of things, but many of them aren't worth the effort. Polyphasic sleeping is *definitely* an effort; probably as much of one as becoming vegan or taking up an athletic regime. Sleep is a pretty fundamental thing to change! So **first you need to figure out if you want the change enough to make it worth the effort.**

That means asking yourself some questions and getting some honest answers. None of the answers by themselves are a deal-breaker, but if more than one of these questions reveals a problematic issue for you, you should seriously reconsider any plans to become polyphasic, and if you decide to go forward with it anyway, expect some challenges.

Here are the questions, though there may be others that can also be helpful:

1. Why do you want it? What's your primary reason? Is it powerful enough to be worth spending either several incredibly long days slapping yourself to stay awake, or several weeks feeling like you

¹⁹ I've met several...we get along, but I don't think we grok each other. ;)

²⁰ Which could do horrible things to your bookkeeping, so if you run a business, be careful!

²¹ Actually there's no science on this one way or the other. So maybe you will.

²² Okay, granted, I used to be of this opinion. But I was young and fiery, and I did things like go all winter without shoes so that I wouldn't get too "soft". If sleep is really the nemesis I imagined it was then, then, well, so are shoes. ;)

had half a night's sleep?²³ Think about what it feels like when you skip a whole night's sleep, and then double that and drag it out for a week -- that's a good general image of what you'll feel like while you're adapting. Is the reason you want to be polyphasic compelling enough to be worth that?

2. Do you have a reason other than wanting to try it out? If your reason above is "because it's cool" or "I just want to try it" or "I want to see what it's like", think hard: Most people do much better if they have a compelling reason, even if they don't think they need one. If you don't have a compelling reason, can you create one, or do you really think you can motivate yourself sufficiently without one?
3. Does self-discipline come naturally to you? If not, you may just need to take extra steps to help you succeed. If you've never had to really discipline yourself, you may want to study up on some methods for doing that before attempting to change your sleep schedule drastically. Discipline is a habit, which means that once you "have" it, you'll fall back on it by default, and that's why it's important -- because you *will* reach a point, at least once during adaptation, where you simply can't exert rational power over yourself anymore. Rationality can be a powerful force, but very rarely is it more powerful than your brain/body in full-on survival mode. When you reach that point, the only things that will keep you on schedule are a) someone else or some external thing forcing you to stick with it, or b) your habit of being disciplined.
4. How are you with physical discomfort? If you can't stand feeling dizzy, spacey, tingly, dry-eyed, achy, weak, nauseous, stupid, and generally like you've been hit by a bus and then buried in peat moss, you're going to fold up, probably during or after day two. It takes a certain skill to let your body's discomfort be a bit separate from you, and without that skill, adaptation will be very, very difficult. If you don't have the skill and want to learn it, I suggest getting tattoos (piercings don't work; they happen too fast) ...or giving birth. :)
5. How are you with mental discomfort? Besides the zombie-like levels of intelligence you'll possess for a few days during adaptation, it's also common to experience other psychological effects when deprived of sleep. Your brain is a survival machine, and it panics when it feels threatened, which it will when it suddenly stops being able to get the sleep it's used to (and until it gets used to sleeping on the schedule you give it). For a short time, you will probably experience doubts, mood swings, possibly some depression, maybe some psychosomatic physical symptoms, and quite likely a few hallucinations. Like fasting or any other extreme physiological challenge, adjusting to a polyphasic schedule means being able to beat your own brain at the game of controlling your body. It's not easy, but the feeling of victory is amazing. (And there are other rewards too, in this case.)
6. How are you with people thinking you're a weirdo? This can range from funny looks to being publicly called a lunatic and told that you shouldn't be allowed to look after yourself if that's the kind of crap you're going to do...it can be mild or severe depending on your lifestyle, but it never stops, really, for as long as you're on the schedule. Also, are you okay with occasionally being cornered and asked tons of questions by people you wouldn't normally talk to? (It's taken me a while to get used to that!)
7. How much do you need company? One effect of polyphasic sleeping is that you tend to spend a noticeably higher percentage of time being by yourself. You're awake more often when other people are asleep, and sleeping during some of the time they're awake. Make sure your family and

²³ Which one depends on the schedule you choose, obviously. It shouldn't be overlooked, though, that whichever schedule you pick, if you mess up during your adaptation, you could be in for both. (More about the Adaptation process in the next chapter.)

social selves (and companions) are okay with that. (If you get lonely and have a friend or partner who'll do this with you, that can be great...but if you like being alone, be careful of having anyone adapt with you, because you'll probably be seeing them a *lot!*)

8. Are you punctual? Because there's a massive amount of scheduling and timing involved in being polyphasic (compared to "regular" living, where your schedule is typically just an automatic outgrowth of your activities). It's harder (i.e. crazy strict) while you're adjusting, but you still have to do some kind of scheduling for pretty much the whole time you're polyphasic. If you hate clocks, hate planning your activities, or are always behind-schedule and late getting places, you may want to either reconsider polyphasic sleep, or work on your punctuality first.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

Okay, so let's assume you've decided that you're the right kind of person for this. There are still obstacles, unfortunately -- some of which can be overcome, and some of which, sometimes, can't. The general rule from the last section applies here too: If more than one of the following is an issue for you, you may *really* want to reconsider, because being polyphasic could be very difficult for you. Having just one of these obstacles is usually workable, though it's still good to know what your obstacle is, because it gives you an idea where you're going to put the most work into adapting to and living on a polyphasic schedule.

1. Do people depend on you? By which I mean, do you have children, elderly relatives, or others who need you to be available on a drop-of-the-hat basis? Polyphasic sleeping can be a tempting idea for overworked mothers and caregivers, but the problem with sleeping much less is that you *need* the sleep you do get. If you're going to be woken up from your naps, you simply won't be able to adjust, no matter what. (You also need enough backup to be a zombie for a few days while you adjust initially, of course.) However, if you can be assured of not being woken at all during your adjustment, and infrequently after that, then it can be worth a shot.
2. Do people boss you? Jobs aren't necessarily insurmountable, but it depends on whether you can get a little freedom in your daily grind, to take your naps. If you work on a factory floor with someone monitoring what you do every minute and sending you memos about cutting down on the duration of your bathroom breaks, then polyphasic sleep probably won't work for you. (That is, unless you work part-time, or your hours are short enough and/or breaks spaced right so that you can sleep at least once during the day, which even the most forgiving Everyman schedule will require you to do.) You can also try convincing your boss(es) that letting you have a nap is beneficial (*see Appendix II* for sample arguments to bosses).
3. Do you like to party? Sure, polyphasic sleep makes the "rock and roll all night and party every day" dream look tantalizingly achievable, but unfortunately the two pursuits are usually incompatible. Once in a while doesn't seem to be a problem, but I've never seen a regular partygoer also manage to be polyphasic. Firstly, partying doesn't lend itself to taking a break precisely at X o'clock to get your nap (no matter who is currently hitting on you, picking a fight with you, throwing up on you...). It can be difficult, if you're "out" a lot, to find good and safe places to sleep; and even if you do always have a place to sleep, calming down from partying-mode into nap-mode, and then getting up and back into party-mode, is just too much of a jump for most people's systems. Also, alcohol and polyphasic sleep don't get along well; a glass of wine or a beer here and there doesn't seem to pose a problem, but getting drunk will absolutely make you oversleep, so if you like to

drink very often, I would say don't even bother with polyphase²⁴.

4. Are you on a very strict diet? It's not impossible to maintain a strict diet on a polyphasic sleep schedule, but it definitely is harder. For one thing, sleeping less can change your metabolism (the jury is still out on how, though the effects do seem to usually be mild, which is why it's only a known problem if you're on a *strict* diet), and if your diet relies on proscribed amounts of certain things, you will probably need to change those amounts to account for needing more energy. Also, if your diet is very "bare bones" – i.e. low-calorie, vegan, macrobiotic, etc. -- then you may have trouble with the adjustment period, which is hard on your body anyway. (Nobody's ever gotten seriously ill²⁵ or injured as a result of the sleep-deprivation involved in adjusting their sleep schedule that I know of, but I do know that people with stricter diets seem to have more trouble maintaining enough energy to function.) Also, making two major changes at once is almost impossible²⁶, so don't decide to become polyphasic and go vegetarian at the same time, for instance.
5. Are you ill? This sort of goes without saying, but if you have a chronic or long-term illness, or are currently sick with anything, you shouldn't even be thinking about messing with your system this way, at the very least not without the input of a doctor. A doctor will probably tell you that your body needs all the sleep it can get in order to heal or maintain your health, and I find little reason to argue, there. When I'm sick with one of the usual winter or sinus things that go around²⁷, one of the first things I do is sleep my butt off for a day (or two, if it's a bad one), and it really helps me heal. (In fact, a side-benefit of polyphasic sleep that I've experienced is that sleep is much more healing than it used to be. When I routinely slept 8 hours, sleeping in was useful but not magic; now that 4 is the norm, sleeping for 6 or 7 is amazingly restorative when I'm ill. I can't imagine restricting your amount of sleep while you're ill, but different illnesses function differently (some illnesses, for instance, actually benefit from fasting, which is also somewhat counterintuitive) – so in the end, it comes down to asking your doctor and being responsible about it.
6. Are you uninterruptible? Being polyphasic does sometimes mean having to put down what you're doing, sleep, and come back to it. If you find this incredibly difficult or impossible, either for personal reasons (you're autistic or have OCD, or you just hate being interrupted, or you're terrible at picking things back up after you've put them down) or for real-world reasons (you're a surgeon, or you conduct interventions or run a suicide hotline, etc), then you will probably have trouble with polyphasic sleep. Then again, if your activities tend to interrupt your regular sleep anyway, you may benefit from polyphasic sleep, where you can recover (somewhat) with a nap rather than go a whole day being tired. (You probably want to stay away from Uberman, though, where missed or fudged naps can really wipe you out.)
7. Are you crazy busy...enough? A polyphasic lifestyle can mean a *lot of boredom* if you don't have enough to do to fill it up. If you already spend some time every day wondering what to do next, then adding on 4-6 hours to each day is probably just going to drive you insane. While you can use some of your newfound time to relax and have fun (for some of us, it's the only reason we ever *can* relax!), you can't use all of it, or even most of it, that way. (For one thing, if you tell your body that

24 I realize this technically isn't a word, but I've gotten used to using "polyphase" and "monophase" as shorthand for polyphasic- and/or monophasic sleep. If it bothers you, I apologize, but not too sincerely since I'll probably keep doing it. ;)

25 With the exception of people who don't successfully adapt AND don't quit trying, therefore keeping themselves sleep-deprived for a stupid long time. I'll repeat myself about this somewhat, but this is why attempting polyphasic sleep, if you're going to do it, needs to be done *right* or not done!

26 After I'd been polyphasic for a year, I started experimenting with 24-hour weekly fasts. It wasn't horrible, but after a few weeks I had to make some changes, since the fasting was running me out of energy and I wasn't sleeping well. A 24-hour fast isn't really a big deal – but it's enough to affect a polyphasic schedule.

27 I get these less often now than I did while monophasic, but that may be attributable to other positive changes I've made to try and take care of myself better -- eating better and using a neti pot, for instance.

it's 2 a.m. and you'd like to relax now, it often says, "Okay, let's go to sleep!")²⁸ Ask yourself honestly if you are, or can be made, busy enough to use an extra 1/3 of a day, every single day. If the answer is no, you're probably better off just learning to manage your time more efficiently, than you are picking up a polyphasic schedule.

8. Are you loud? Depending on your living situation, polyphasic sleep may mean a lot of time being awake and being quiet, because other people are sleeping. Ask yourself if that's okay, and if you can stay occupied (not watching-TV occupied, but really occupied) while maintaining the level of noise-control you need. You can also plan things to do out of the house during key quiet-requiring hours, but that can be difficult or impossible depending on where you live.

²⁸ On the flipside, you can't work your butt off for 20 hours a day, either. What's healthy varies by person, but generally speaking, you'll need a good mix of physical and stationary activities, and of brain-work and brain-candy.

IV. Adapting to Polyphasic Sleep

So, here's the nitty-gritty. You've decided that you want to adopt a polyphasic sleeping schedule; now, how to go about it?

RESEARCHING

You're already doing a very important preparatory step: RESEARCH. Knowing about polyphasic sleep, what it is and what you want from it, and what to expect from the transition and afterwards, enables you to anticipate and plan for both the transition and your own likely difficulties, and to spot when something isn't working right. Besides reading this book, you may also want to follow some other adaptation stories in blogs or discussion groups, if you want a better idea of "what it's like"; and if you're scientifically minded or have a special concern, such as about a health condition, you may want to do additional research for that as well.

DECIDING

Once you've done some research on polyphasic sleep itself, such as you've gotten from reading the previous chapters, determine which schedule you want to adapt to. Picking a schedule that's right for you and your lifestyle will help save you the agony of an unsuccessful adaptation, so choose carefully.

Here's a useful hint: **If you have to heavily customize a schedule to get it to work around your life, then it's not a good one to start your adaptation to polyphasic sleep on.** *Why* the Uberman, Everyman and Dymaxion schedules work is still something of a mystery, and while it seems likely that other schedules built on similar formulas should work, testing them should be left to people who've already successfully adapted to polyphasic sleep in some form²⁹. When you're going from monophasic to polyphasic, you have no frame of reference for what it feels like when a schedule is working. You risk failing, either because the schedule you picked simply won't work, or because you have no way of knowing when it is working and so quit early. Either experience would be miserable, so why go through it? If you're adapting from a monophasic or biphasic (siesta) schedule, pick a known polyphasic schedule to try, and aim to make as few "customizations" to it as possible.

Also, **don't fudge the details** because something "sounds better" or more likely to work. A common example is the 20-minute duration of the naps: Many people decide to make it 30, or 40 minutes, thinking that this will make the schedule easier to adapt to. In fact, it will make it almost impossible to adapt, and 20 minutes really is the most optimum time to start with. Don't make changes "just because", and if you really want to make a change, try asking some other polyphasers first to see if anybody's tried it.

SCHEDULING

Once you've picked which schedule you think is for you, write down your sleep schedule, noting activities that have to take place around it, such as work or classes. Aim to have all of your sleeping happen at the same time each day. If you're choosing an Everyman schedule, you can allow for some sway in the timing of your naps, but you should still plan to get them in at the same time whenever you can. If you have to permanently move a nap farther than you should (or at all, on Uberman), say, an hour later on Tuesdays, then expect this to make you tired at that time (for a while), and plan accordingly. Having an uneven nap schedule may also make your adaptation period slightly longer, but if you stick tight to your

²⁹ Or who, at the very least, have a whole lot of lifestyle-flexibility to work with

schedule, you will eventually get used to the unevenness, too. This is what one of my written-down schedules looked like:

	MON	Tues	Wed	Thurs	FRI	SAT	SUN
midnight	read or relax	read or relax	read or relax	read or relax	read or relax	read or relax	read or relax
1a	3-hour core nap						
2a							
3a							
4a							
5a	writing	writing	writing	writing	writing	writing	writing
6a	leave for work	leave for work	leave for work	leave for work	leave for work		
7a							breakfast w/ gran
8a	morning nap between 8-9 a.m.						
9a							
10a							
11a							
12p						short nap before Taiji	
1p	lunch	lunch	lunch	lunch	lunch	Taiji class 1:00 - 3:30	
2p	afternoon nap between 2-3 p.m.						
3p							
4p						afternoon nap	
5p							
6p	Taiji class 6:00 - 7:30	home from work	Taiji class 6:00 - 7:30	home from work	home from work		
7p	play time	play time	play time	play time	play time		
8p	kiddo's bedtime	kiddo's bedtime	kiddo's bedtime	kiddo's bedtime	kiddo's bedtime	kiddo's bedtime	kiddo's bedtime
9p	8:30 - 9:00 evening nap	8:30 - 9:00 evening nap	8:30 - 9:00 evening nap	8:30 - 9:00 evening nap	8:30 - 9:00 evening nap	8:30 - 9:00 evening nap	8:30 - 9:00 evening nap
10p	homework	homework	homework	homework	homework	homework	homework
11p	homework	homework	homework	homework	homework	homework	homework

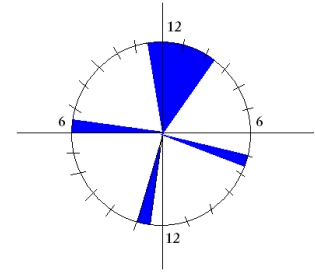
Now, this wasn't the first schedule I ever wrote, nor the last. I've included this version because it contains several useful things to notice:

- I did have to move one nap, for my Taiji class on Saturday. At first I tried to just make it later, but I realized after a few weeks that I couldn't do 1.5 hours of exercise while sleepy (or at least, it was no fun), so I added in a 10 minute nap before class to take the edge off. That worked, so I kept it. ("Micro" or very small naps don't work for everyone, and I don't recommend them while you're still learning to nap, because they'll probably just make you more tired. By the time I added this, I'd already done polyphasic sleep of some sort for quite a while.) I point this out because it's the kind of "little

adjustment" that many people have to make, when life gets in the way of having a perfect schedule. It can take several weeks or months to get it all just right, so don't be upset if at first you adapt, but there are still some times when you get tired. (As long as you *have* adapted. If you don't adapt, there's a problem; read the rest of this chapter for more info on how to tell the difference.) Aim to have to make as few of these adjustments as possible, but don't stress about one or two of them.

- I have an hour's sway in which to take my naps, because I'm doing 3-hour-core Everyman. It's still a struggle to get them in on time, some days, if work is hectic. If I goof up a nap, I get tired, just like you get tired if you stay up late or don't get enough sleep on a regular monophasic schedule. On a polyphasic schedule, though, you feel your lack of sleep more (because you're getting less sleep overall). It's very noticeable, especially if I miss a nap -- within an hour of naptime, I'll feel like a monophaser who got shorted by several hours the previous night. (On Uberman, missing a nap will make you miserable for most of a day; you'll feel sleep-deprived within half an hour, and it'll sometimes take several regular naps to catch up.) You go from zero to sleep deprivation very quickly on a polyphasic schedule, because you're squeezing more rest out of less sleep. Getting a nap late may make a polyphaser tired for part of the rest of the day, but after a regular, on-time nap (sometimes it takes two), this usually dissipates. Mind you, that's *when fully adapted* -- missed or late naps while you're still getting used to your schedule may make you more tired, or less, but it will definitely be more difficult to sleep and wake up on time for a while afterwards. This is what's meant when polyphasers talk about "extending your adaptation period" -- if you goof up naps in the first month or two, you make your whole schedule take longer to get used to. And you can't indefinitely drag out your adaptation without harming your ability to sleep and get rest, so it's really worth the effort to just make sure goof-ups don't happen! Figure out how much leeway you need in your nap-times, and choose a schedule accordingly. (Definitely don't choose Uberman unless you're confident that you can take your naps right on time, in all but the most extreme extenuating circumstances. Missing sleep while on, or adapting to, the Uberman schedule is *really* unpleasant!)
- I schedule in my relaxation time. If you have the tendency, as I do, to "run until you drop" (or develop physical symptoms of being overstressed), then it's not a bad idea to designate some book, tv, video-game, art, or stare-at-the-wall time. When polyphasic, it's even easier than normal for a person who tends to overwork to get going and keep going...and going...and going...! However, while you're adapting, you don't want your relaxation time to be where mine is, late at night or right before a nap, when you'll be tired. Try to put it during the day, or in between naps, instead, so you don't risk falling asleep.
- I left unscheduled time on the weekends -- it's important, at least to me, not to feel like every second of my life is predetermined. During unscheduled time I get to do whatever I want, and even though that sometimes means mowing the lawn or running errands, it's still "up in the air" until it actually happens. Otherwise I start to feel like I'm in an Orwell novel. Whether you do this or not is up to you, but I do advise minimizing "unscheduled time" during the first week or two of your adaptation. When you're tired, it's *very* hard to decide what to do next. It's much better to always know what you should be doing, so you don't have to think about it (because chances are nothing will sound fun, at times, except sleeping!)
- I had to give up eating big lunches, because eating too much before a nap makes the nap less refreshing and harder to wake up from. However, I couldn't get a nap in before lunch (sometimes I can, in real life, but I couldn't schedule it that way), so I changed my diet to include small, light lunches. This has worked fine, but it shows how sometimes changes other than sleep are necessary.

There are many other ways to keep a schedule, if you get creative: To the right is a scheduling-style based on a 24-hour clock, suggested to me by Eveline, a reader. (Thanks!) The blue sections are naps (this is an Everyman schedule, obviously). This type of schedule lets you easily see whether your naps are evenly spaced, and would be great for scheduling other regular things like meals and exercise, as well.



You won't necessarily have to live on a schedule like this the entire time you're polyphasic. Some people will choose to, and others will loosen up or abandon their set schedules (except for the sleeping part) once they're adapted. What you do is up to you. I've done both, and overall I prefer having a schedule; but I've been polyphasic without one and it worked okay. They're a good idea to have while adapting, though, for the reasons shown above.

Your schedule doesn't have to be perfect, and you will make changes to it. But the better it is to start with, and the closer you stick to it, the easier and more quickly the adaptation period will go.

OTHER ITEMS ON THE PRE-FLIGHT CHECKLIST

☐ **The Big Fat List.** This is your best friend, and one of the things I credit the most with getting me through my adaptations. It's a monster list of *everything you can think of to do* with your extra time while you're adapting. (No matter how well you schedule your days, you're 99% likely to have extra time. On Uberman, it can seem like *endless* extra time at first, so to adopt this polyphasic schedule, you'll want a *really* big list. To give you an idea, when I adapted to Uberman, my list was over 80 items long...and I did all of it in about three days.) Don't forget to include some **items that can be done specifically at night**, which may involve being quiet or not having much light; **items that don't require much intricate thinking or coordination**, since you'll be sleep-deprived for some of this; and **items that keep your body moving**, because sometimes it's flat impossible to stay awake without moving around when you're sleep deprived. That's not to say you can't or shouldn't put "Learn Japanese" or "practice flamenco guitar" on your List; only that you should make sure to *also* include things you can do when you're not at your best, physically or mentally. Also, while one bit undifferentiated list is fine, it's also a good idea to set aside some "major undertakings" to accomplish on nights two, three, four, and maybe five too. You don't want to be stuck wondering what to do next when you're extremely tired, because guess what you'll probably decide to do? And if you *really* want to be ahead of the curve, try to come up with things to do that you plan to do every night, so you can set up those habits early.

Here are some of the Big Fat List items that really saved my butt, through both adaptations:

- *Cleaning* is probably the best one in my book. Organize the sock drawer. Re-arrange all the books. Scrub the corners of the room with an old toothbrush. De-tarnish all the silver. Dust the ceilings. These are all easy things to do when your brain isn't working too well, they keep you moving, and they have the bonus of giving you a sense of accomplishment -- look what you did with that extra time! Wow! Add some music for a little extra stimulation, if desired.
- *Correspondence* is also pretty good, because writing letters, preparing cards and little presents to mail, and making phone calls is relatively entertaining, and being engaged with others (even indirectly) will distract you from feeling tired and/or crappy. Use some of your time to catch up with people you've lost touch with, or owe some kind of attention; again, you'll feel good about it, too.
- *Walking* comes highly recommended, especially at night, if you live in a safe area. Fresh air and brisk walking can really help wake you up, and if you're at the stage where you're having trouble sleeping for your naps, it can help tire you out right before a nap, too. (It helped me out so much during my first

adaptation that, when I planned to re-adapt, I made sure to do it during the summer so I could walk at night!)

- *Cooking*, if you like to do it or want to learn. Be careful though; some polyphasers have gained weight while adapting, because eating *is* a good way to rouse yourself, and the smell/presence of food will help keep you awake. (Just make sure you're around mostly healthy food. Being awake longer, it's okay to eat a bit more; just be sure it's not a bit more junk!) Also, be safe – don't make *flambe* at 3 a.m. on day three!
- *Projects* that are sitting on your “perpetual to-do list” can be great ways to fill the time, but look out for two things: One, what specific activity does the project require right now? If it's at a stage where it needs two hours of Internet research, then 4 a.m. probably isn't a good time to do it. Second, don't be vague or you'll talk yourself out of it. Make sure you write down what *exactly* to do, not just “work on that project”.
- *Being Social* can help, as long as you're a) able to leave the social situation precisely on time to get your nap, and b) staying sober. If you've got a friend who wants to play video games with you at 2 a.m. though, that can help a *lot*. (Especially if you can talk your friend into sticking around while you nap, and sticking the controller back in your hands when you wake up again.)
- *Exercise* gets tossed around a lot as a good stay-awake activity; personally I'm ambiguous about it. I've never had much luck talking myself into working out when I have that run-over-by-a-train feeling that accompanies parts of adaptation. And you definitely don't want to drastically increase your exercise regimen while you're adapting to a new sleep-schedule – your body can only take so much at once! But the occasional jumping-jacks or their equivalent do wake you up. Done moderately, and especially if it's something you enjoy, exercise can really help you, not only to stay awake, but to feel more alert and less like you've been sat on by a hippo.
- *Feel free to get weird*. Here's one I didn't tell anybody about, because (at least for a while there) even I didn't want to admit to being this weird. But heck, it worked, and you bought the book, so you deserve to know about it. Sometimes being tired, especially for a solid week straight, becomes emotionally exhausting; you get sick to death of telling yourself not to think about it, not to act on it. And everyone (in my experience) who goes through this hits a point, or several, where you just feel like you can't do it anymore. When it was nearly morning of Day Three³⁰ of my first Uberman adaptation, I hit that point: just couldn't take it anymore, and I certainly couldn't take it quietly. So I stood up in my dorm room, where I'd been trying to do something or another to stay awake, and shouted, “I'm [bleep]ing sick of being tired! I feel like my brains are made of Jell-O and melting down into my shoes! I feel like a zombie took a crap in my head! And why the heck are my arms tingling; what possible evolutionary good does *that* serve?” And so on. I ranted and raved pretty much straight through until I had to go to class, and lo, I felt *tons* better. So if all you can do is think about how tired you are, use it -- compose some poetry to that effect, or a song, a speech, or a one-act play. Get excited about it: pace around, wave your arms; do the mad-composer thing. Sometimes when all that's left in your mind is exhaustion, the sense of exhaustion itself can become your fuel for a while.

☐ **Backup Alarms.** These are an absolute necessity. Note that it says “backup alarmS” -- two will work if one of them is really hardcore, but three is better, and five or six never hurts. Here's what I know about alarms:

- What wakes you up the best differs by person, so give it some thought, but in reality “what works best for you” matters more later on: During adaptation, you want to focus on *quantity*. Why? Because you're sleep-deprived, and so you're going to sleep through anything at times. The more mechanisms you have in place to wake yourself, the better!
- Do stagger alarms, but keep in mind your goal is to get up *on time*, not half an hour late after you've shut off six alarms. You are training your brain here; consistency and precision counts. Try to make

³⁰ It might have been the same time on Day Two; I'm not positive. The end of the night of Day Two is a common place for people to hit the skids, but I seem to remember getting lucky, because I was out in public the night of Day Two. It was three, I think, that really hit me like a freight train.

your first alarm something that, unless you just sleep right through it, will compel you to wake up completely, and aim to never have to use your backup alarms. (You will, but the point is to think of them as emergency backups only.) Or use backup alarms to make you move around -- set them all for the same time, but put a few in your room, one in the hall, two in the kitchen...by the time you get done shutting them off, hopefully, you'll be away from your bed and somewhat awake.

- Whatever else you have, buy several (at least two) kitchen timers. Aim for loud ones and, if possible, ones that aren't too easy to reset. These are highly portable³¹, awesome alarms for use as backups or when sleeping away from home; and they can also function to remind you when it's naptime -- just set one for three hours and forty minutes³² when you first wake up.
- The single most effective method of waking up when you're sleep deprived is probably to have someone wake you, especially if they put something in your hands that needs doing. (My awesome co-conspirator in the original Uberman experiments used to pop open a can of Coke and hand it to me, and I just couldn't go back to sleep when there was someone in my room and I was holding a full can!³³) The telephone also wakes many people (including me) reliably -- I'll stand up and go answer it, even if I'm dead out...even if I don't wake up until a ways into the conversation! These two methods can be tough to arrange, but if you can get them, especially for some nighttime naps over the first (and maybe second) week of your adaptation, I highly recommend it.
- Check and see if a wake-up call service is available to you -- they're a weird perk that gets tacked onto the end of a lot of packaged services. Or you could use something like www.telepixie.com, which is (at time of this writing) a free computer service that will call your house. It's great; the only downside to it is that, in my experience so far, it's not very accurate about when it calls. It hits the ballpark, but can be off by as much as ten minutes, which makes it really only useful as a backup. I believe there are pay services available, too.
- Don't forget your appliances! Anything that can be plugged into a wall can be put on a timer. Outlet-timers are cheap; I recently bought a two-pack at Ikea for something like six dollars. Your TV can be a good alarm, but don't stop there -- one genius used to load up his blender with the makings for a smoothie, and then plug it into a timer, so right when his alarm (a kitchen timer) went off, the blender started up -- noisy and requiring immediate attention, plus it produced food (cold, healthy food, even) that woke him up further.
- A variation on the Appliances theme is the ingenious idea of the "water clock"³⁴. It takes a little geekiness to put together, but basically, if you can rig up a pump (on a timer), hose, and water source, you can be virtually guaranteed of getting up on time, every time!
- I probably don't have to mention how computers can be useful as alarms; if you have one and use it enough for its presence to rouse you, you probably know seven or eight different ways to program it to wake you. If not, don't worry about it; computers can't do much as alarms that can't also be done some other way.
- "Sleep tracks" are quite popular -- these are sound recordings, of the right length for your nap, typically of silence or white noise, followed at the appropriate time by something raucous to wake you up. A gentleman with the nickname "Placebo" made the first of these that I ever heard of, and I used one of his myself for a while, because it was convenient and effective as an alarm. (You can still find them on his website; check the Resources at the end.) I didn't use it while adapting, though, so I can't speak to its efficacy while going through sleep-dep.

Among the many, many reasons for adapting *right the first time* is the efficacy of alarms: They all work SO much better when you're not used to them! If you start off right, then you'll only need your million-backup-alarms for a few weeks total, and the really hardcore ones for only about a week of that.

31 Think "alarm going off that I stuck on the back of the fridge".

32 On Uberman, obviously.

33 Our diets back then would make any carbon-based life-form wince -- I'm certainly not advocating drinking that stuff. Anymore, I use it to clean my car battery!

34 Great, now that I said that, I want to go get my dice and pencils. ;)

When they're all "new" to your brain, they work great -- but if you goof up and start over, they're not so new anymore, and it becomes harder to wake up to them. What's more, people who fail to adapt and "keep trying" a lot can even make themselves somewhat *immune to alarms* in general, which in turn makes adapting nearly impossible. I feel terrible for these people, because, while they want to be polyphasic enough to keep trying to adapt over and over (and that's no picnic!), the more they don't get it right and keep coming back to it, the less likely they are to succeed. After any failure at adaptation, I recommend at least a few months of regular, monophasic sleep³⁵, and that every effort be made to adapt properly and completely the next time. I've known plenty of people who goofed it once but were able, after a break, to make it work the next time ... but I haven't known anyone who goofed several times in a row and "then got it", unfortunately.

UNDERSTANDING Sleep Deprivation

Most people have experienced mild sleep-deprivation, such as you get from staying up for a whole 24 hours or so. Acute sleep deprivation is a bit different. You won't feel the acute sleep-dep for very long while adjusting to a polyphasic schedule³⁶, but even getting through a couple hours of it can be a major undertaking.

Short-term sleep dep, even acute sleep dep, is for the most part not dangerous. (It can be if you, say, operate heavy machinery, but you're not going to do that, now, are you?) It's just like hunger: It's your body attempting to get you to fulfill its need. Just like hunger, you don't want to live with sleep-deprivation in the long-term; it would almost certainly do icky things to your system. In the short-term, though, both my experience and my reading back up the fact that it's generally harmless.

However, your brain is not an insignificant opponent -- you might say it's your perfect nemesis. And when it really pulls out the big guns--most often during parts of nights two, three and four of your adaptation--the results can be quite intimidating. Don't underestimate how challenging this will be!

When the serious sleep-dep hits, you may experience any of the following physical symptoms: **Chills, body ache, dizziness, headache, dry/sore eyes, and narcolepsy (falling asleep against your will.)** You may also experience nausea, prickling or tingling sensations, or other physical manifestations.

Usually, you'll also experience at least one of the following mental symptoms: Mood swings, irritability, auditory or visual hallucinations, confusion³⁷, feelings of helpless and a desire to give up.

Now. What do do about it?

The first thing is to be, and stay, aware of what you're up against: Your own brain/body, in survival mode. Knowing this will make the symptoms seem less scary and random, and you'll be better able to respond appropriately to each one. Sometimes you'll want to alleviate the symptom to make yourself more comfortable -- with a warm shower, or eyedrops, etc. (just not sleep!) -- and sometimes you'll find it best to ignore it and plow forward. Knowing what you're dealing with will also help greatly with the mental symptoms, especially as giving up begins to sound like a sweeter and sweeter plan. (Staying aware of the nature of the problems--that they're caused by sleep-dep and normal and temporary--can also help you stay calm. Anxiety exacerbates almost every symptom, physical *or* mental.) Remember, your brain is actively going to encourage, even try to force, you to change your mind about not sleeping. It will aim to

³⁵ Another reason for this is that unsuccessful adaptation builds a sleep-debt and makes you sleep-deprived (you've gotten to the sleep-deprived part of adaptation but not past it). Adapting is difficult enough when you start it fresh that I can't imagine how anyone could ever do it if they *began* the process still sleep-deprived from a previous attempt!

³⁶ Assuming you're doing it properly, which is the idea after all.

³⁷ This one looks innocuous, but don't underestimate it...it can be really disturbing to realize that you can't figure out how to put your shoes on at the moment.

make it miserable to continue, and for a short time, it will succeed! You'll need to have decided firmly, before beginning the experiment, to keep going in spite of any amount of misery³⁸. It helps to keep reminders on hand of why you don't want to quit--sticky-notes, recorded messages, whatever you think will work. **Remind yourself that if you stick to your schedule, this part will be over soon!**

Designating a Kill Switch

In order to tell yourself to "keep going no matter what", you need to put aside the worry that it really might be time to quit, that you might be getting sick, etc. The best way I know to do this is to designate someone else to be your "Kill Switch", whose job it is to keep an eye on you and call a halt to the experiment if it gets out of hand. That person will have to be able to watch you be miserable and look like crap for a while without freaking out. (Hint: Generally speaking, your parents are a bad bet.) Educate the person about what you're doing, what symptoms are normal, and what your goals are. Make sure they know that you may try to talk them into letting you quit, and set up some concrete instances of things that should make them worry, so they have some benchmarks that are objective of what you tell them. Make sure they know that it's normal for acute symptoms to continue for a week (Uberman) or two (Everyman). Then, let them worry about quitting, and don't you even consider stopping unless your Kill Switch says to!

What's the Purpose of Sleep Deprivation Here?

Sleep deprivation, while no fun, is an important part of adjusting to any polyphasic schedule. The sleep-dep is your brain "talking to you", telling you that it's no longer getting its sleep; and you're "answering" it by taking regular naps³⁹. Your mind/body is very much a machine in some ways, and the way it works here is predictable: Sleep-dep is the normal, first-line response. When increasingly acute sleep-deprivation doesn't make you change, your brain will go to the second response: It will adjust to the circumstances it's stuck with, and switch to getting its sleep by adapting to your new schedule. When this works, you'll stop having symptoms. It's the sleep-dep – having it and beating it – that makes polyphasic sleep work, in a sense.⁴⁰

This, to say it again, is why *consistent* adherence to your new polyphasic schedule is so important: If you respond to sleep deprivation by sleeping extra, then you're telling your brain that it doesn't have to adapt; that applying the right pressure will make you change back to the comfortable old habit of sleeping for long periods of time. If you give in (even once), your brain takes it as a sign that it should keep up--even increase!--the sleep-deprivation symptoms, since they're working. It's imperative that they *not work*; that no matter what the symptoms, you sleep on your new schedule exactly. This will get your brain to give up on sleep dep as quickly as possible--usually within a few days--and resort instead to changing your sleeping patterns so that your naps give you the rest you need. **The more "mistakes", the more sleep-dep.**

38 Tell yourself (loudly, constantly, in writing -- whatever it takes) that no matter how much it sucks, you're going to do it perfectly for one whole week. If you do, and after a week you don't feel 95-100% better, then there's something very wrong with the schedule you're adapting to, or how. If you do feel better, then remind yourself that it takes at least 30 days to become fully adapted, so don't start slacking off now!

39 Regular naps in a pattern known to provide the rest you need, once you adapt. As we discussed previously, just any old naps won't do it.

40 Some people claim that a more gradual adaptation can work while minimizing sleep deprivation symptoms. There's an Appendix that describes this more fully.

Physical Symptoms of the Adaptation Period

The process of adopting a new sleep schedule puts your system under a pretty good load of stress. Obviously if anything extreme happens, or if you think something's wrong, see your doctor-figure. But you may notice physical symptoms like these for a week or two, which are, to my knowledge, normal:

- Increased or decreased appetite
- Tendency to feel cold; goosebumps
- Dry eyes; periods of blurred or doubled vision
- Muscle aches or headaches (dull ones, not splitting ones)
- Tinnitus (ringing in the ears)
- Weak immune system, especially if you're prone to such weakness

Handling Narcoleptic Symptoms

For most people, out of all the sleep-dep symptoms, the narcolepsy is the really tough thing to handle. Most people are lucky enough not to have experienced prolonged narcolepsy, though it can be a disease all on its own for some unfortunate individuals⁴¹. During the course of normal sleeplessness, people will usually get sleep-deprived enough to experience narcolepsy as a symptom, and then they either fall asleep, or are kept going by some emergency or other heightened situation which overrides or blunts the narcolepsy. Unfortunately, you're unlikely to have, or be able to manufacture, enough emergency-like situations to get you through all the narcolepsy of your polyphasic adaptation. Almost everyone has to "tough it out" at least once.

So, narcolepsy is the fancy term for what's commonly, sometimes jokingly called "falling asleep standing up". But that's no joke -- you really *can* fall asleep standing up. Or in the bath, or driving, or while stuff is on the stove...needless to say, when you're experiencing this symptom (which typically comes in hour-or-less-long spurts), it's imperative to observe safety rules, like you would if you were taking heavy painkillers.

- **DO NOT** operate a vehicle or other heavy or dangerous machinery. If you are in the middle of doing something dangerous, like driving, and you start to notice narcoleptic symptoms, **STOP** immediately, take some of the steps listed here to alleviate the symptom, and don't continue until you're *sure* it's safe.
- For driving specifically, if you begin to nod off, do one of the following:
 - Open the windows all the way and crank the radio
 - Sing very loudly and enthusiastically
 - Do "The Shuffle" (see the Cheat Sheet at the end on "Things to do when you're tired" for a description of this technique)
 - Pull over, get out and take a short, brisk walk

DO NOT "just keep driving" or try to "get through it!"
Saving a little time is not worth having an accident!!

Also, while narcoleptic symptoms are typically worst at night, they can sometimes happen during the day as well. I always advocate being off work for the first few difficult days of your adaptation (typically days 2-5 or so), but if you do have to do sensitive things during this time, you'll want to keep a sharp eye out and take steps to alleviate narcolepsy as soon as you notice it coming on.

⁴¹ I refer to narcolepsy as a symptom, because the word is commonly used to describe the state of falling asleep uncontrollably, even when it's temporary. The disease "narcolepsy", which is the more technical use of the word, is characterized by frequent uncontrollable sleeps, often ruining someone's life and/or requiring medication. Narcolepsy-the-symptom can also be a side-effect of some medications.

Alleviating the narcoleptic symptoms of sleep deprivation is not always possible -- there will be short periods where your body is absolutely trying to fall asleep, right here right now. All you can do then is force yourself to stay awake until the feeling passes: By hopping into a cold shower, shaking your head or slapping your face, jumping or running in place, or taking a brisk walk outside, for instance. (Or-- this one I thought was particularly smart--by holding dishes. One creative polyphaser told me about walking around his house carrying a big stack of dishes, which not only kept him from falling asleep, but guaranteed that if he did, he'd wake back up immediately!) Almost every polyphasic adaptation involves getting to the point of needing to do those things at least once -- but don't worry; typically those spells are very short. (Unfortunately, they don't *seem* short.)

When you feel narcoleptic symptoms coming on, there are a few things you can do right away to try to stave off that falling-asleep-standing-up feeling, before it gets to the point where you're slapping yourself while blaring *Star Wars* on the TV as loud as it will go. The "early warning signs" typically include:

- Dizziness and a feeling of gently falling, or spiraling downwards (into sleep)
- Uncontrollable closing of the eyelids
- Heavy, difficult-to-move limbs
- Coldness; a tendency to "curl up"
- Difficulty standing or sitting straight

When those things manifest, your body is trying to shut the lights off on you, so pay attention! Often, if you do one of the following things (or something like them) when you begin to feel this way, it will pass.

Combating Narcolepsy Before it Sets In:

- STAND UP! You'll typically notice the above symptoms while you're sitting or reclining; the very first thing to do is get up and MOVE, no matter how much you don't want to. In fact, walking itself can be a good cure -- just keep going until you feel better. Dancing works great too.
- Make and eat a small meal or snack. Something that takes a little preparation, and/or effort to eat, typically works better than throwing a frozen burrito in the microwave. I used to cook a whole artichoke, and melt butter to dip the leaves in -- by the time I was done making and eating it, an hour could have passed, and any nasty sleep-dep symptoms I'd been having were over.
- Pick up or put on a book, movie, or other entertainment that you find very interesting, which tends to engross you completely.⁴² (Sometimes one you hate can be as effective as one you like, if you *really* hate it. Political media from an extreme opposite your preference can be very useful.)
- Begin a personal-care routine, especially one that you either associate with mornings or only do rarely. Just be careful if you're working with sharp things or chemicals! (I've hennaed my hair with great success for this purpose -- henna is messy and tricky to work with, and the process takes several hours.)
- Change your clothes, and take some care picking them if you can. What works particularly well is to change into something that's not too easy to get into, and which you'd never normally sleep in, like formal clothes. (What the heck, do your hair/makeup/whatever too, if it helps. You're up; you might as well be pretty!)
- Take a cool or cold shower -- *not a bath*, however, since the risk of falling asleep in a bath is too dangerous. Along the same lines, consider opening windows or lowering the temperature where you are some other way: Warmth contributes to sleepiness.

⁴² I've heard that polyphasic adaptation is a great time to rent/borrow/buy an exciting book, TV series or other type of entertainment. (Or better yet, more than one.) And I can see the rationale, because I've gotten "sucked in" to new media and stayed up late just as much as the next guy. It's a good idea if that kind of thing engrosses you, but *take care sitting down* -- putting in your DVD or picking up that book *while standing* may be a much better idea. Also, make sure you don't get *so* engrossed that you miss naptime!

- Talk, recite poetry, sing, or play a musical instrument (whether or not you can do it well): The concentration required to express yourself out loud will distract you from feeling sleepy.
- Court a little (just a little!) danger. Going for a walk at night if you're scared of the dark -- or going to a cemetery or other "creepy" place -- getting just a little bit of a scare on -- is a fantastic way to wake up. Put on a very scary movie, even. Just make sure you don't scare yourself so badly that you can't sleep when it's actually time to!
- Make a phone call. Now is a great time to know someone in another time-zone!

Things that you *don't* want to do when you're feeling the onset of real falling-asleep-standing-up narcolepsy include flipping channels on the TV, reading magazines, surfing the 'Net, or just staring at a wall (which is probably what you'll feel like doing). In order to talk your body out of heavy-handedly pushing you towards sleep, you need to convince it that you're too busy right now, in a way it finds legitimate.⁴³

If you miss that golden opportunity, though, and actually start to exhibit narcolepsy -- you awake with a start, in the middle of doing something, and it's only been a few seconds or minutes (you're having what polyphasers call "microsleeps") -- then things get more difficult. But this will happen to you at least once; it does to almost everybody. Fending off narcolepsy once it's already happening is no fun, but don't give up! It doesn't last very long, and if you get through it you'll feel better in no time. (Remind yourself that this is *it*, this is the important part of the whole process, the point you've been waiting for!)

The following tips should wake you up enough that you can *go back to the previous list*. For all of them, it's important that you follow up with something that'll keep you awake, like a meal or conversation. If you do any of these things and then go sit on the couch, you'll be back to square one! (Or as my friend used to tell me, "Get up! We're going to be awake 22 hours a day -- you'll have time to relax later!" ...And she was right; once we adapted I could relax plenty.)

Combating Narcolepsy Once It's Set In:

- Stomp! Stomp, stomp, stomp. Lift your legs high and stomp--the jarring feeling of your feet landing hard will help, as will the balance challenge. If you know any martial-arts forms (*kata*), you're lucky, because practicing them is also an *excellent* way to back away from the edge of narcolepsy.
- Similarly, hit something: punching bags are *awesome*, or substitute whatever you've got that's safe.
- Stand near a sink or bowl of ice-cold water and splash yourself in the face, arms and neck with it repeatedly.
- Step into a really cold shower. (In your clothes, if you have to. Dealing with the mess and changing clothes when it's over will help keep you awake, too.)
- Go for a run or brisk walk, especially outside if it's cool out.
- Do jumping-jacks or another quick aerobic exercise. Keep going until you're out of breath, but don't push it too far, or you'll make yourself even more tired.
- Put yourself in as (physically) uncomfortable a situation as you can: if you can't sleep with lights on, turn them all on bright; if you don't like noise, turn everything up or put on loud headphones ... when you feel a little more awake, go back to the previous list and find something sleep-unfriendly to do that's a little more comfortable.
- Do some advanced breathing exercises, if you know any. (Simple ones are usually relaxation-oriented and not a good idea! But if you're familiar with any energizing breathing exercises -- Zen and Taiji both have some that I know of -- you may want to practice them until your head clears.) Beware of sitting or lying down, however -- do standing exercises whenever possible.

⁴³ That means that different things work better for different people: Some people can snore out while eating; others' brains could care less about being in the middle of a manicure. Fear is one of very few things that seems to work universally.

Another challenge will present itself after you get through a bad sleep-dep spell, and/or fight off a bout of narcolepsy: The effort will wear you out! It's not uncommon to feel weary, drained, and generally crappy after having successfully navigated a period of sleep-dep symptoms. Going to bed just sounds good on principle, even if you're not tired anymore. And of course, then eventually you do go to bed...and have to wake up 20 minutes later! (Note: Buy at least one extra alarm clock to compensate for the fact that you'll almost certainly break one at some point, out of sheer rage / hatred. For similar reasons, if you have a really nice alarm clock, maybe put it away until the first week has passed.) But all these things pass quickly, and if you keep your eye on the ball, the hard part will be over with before you know it.

Here is a short list of the things I personally found most useful in managing the sleep deprivation through my own adaptation-periods.

PD's Best Ways to Fend Off Sleepiness

- ◆ Shadow-boxing
- ◆ Dancing
- ◆ Singing
- ◆ Brisk Walking
- ◆ Reading aloud from favorite books / poetry
- ◆ Talking on the phone
- ◆ Sculpting, Painting, or other "messy" art projects
- ◆ Organizing drawers & closets
- ◆ Making smoothies or homemade juice
- ◆ Scrubbing not-often-cleaned places
- ◆ Going to the store (whatever's open)
- ◆ Making lists (of anything)

Also, don't forget that for these ideas to be effective, **you have to think of them at the right time** -- which just so happens to be a time when your brain is functioning about as well as boiled cheese. I highly suggest **WRITING DOWN** a list of things to do when you're zonked, and putting it in places where you'll see it at the critical time. You can use the Tiredness Cheat-Sheet at the end of this book as a template, and add your own ideas as you think of them. (There are also a few more "extreme" and "weird" ideas on that cheat-sheet, just in case you really get stuck.)

Ack, I Can't Sleep!

Especially if you were suffering from insomnia before you chose to start a polyphasic schedule, you may notice that you can't sleep for your naps at the beginning. Almost everyone finds they can't nap during the daytime naps on the first, and sometimes the second, day, but for insominacs (and sometimes for non-insomniacs too), it can be several days before you get a good restful nap. This isn't a bad thing; it's just another path to adjustment that the brain/body sometimes takes. You won't be any more tired than someone who's getting 20 minutes of sleep and then waking up, trust me. As long as you start to sleep during your naps within a couple days, and are feeling somewhat better by the end of week one, you should be fine. I've never heard of anyone who started a polyphasic schedule and found that they couldn't sleep *at all* because of it. (And I had pretty severe insomnia when I started Uberman, remember.)

Success! Adjusting to your New Schedule

By the time you get through the first 5-7 days, you should be feeling dramatically better; sleep-dep symptoms should only be happening once or twice a day for short periods of time, and if you keep it up without mistakes, by Day 10 (or earlier) you should feel no deprivation symptoms at all. The process of adjusting usually works like this: For a day or more, you can't sleep at all, or you only sleep for a nap or two (and then are less than happy when you have to wake up after 20 minutes!). Then you begin to sleep

for a nap, or two naps, during the day – that's a good sign that things are progressing. By the end of week one, you should be able to sleep for most or all of your scheduled naps, and be only a little tired, if at all, during the night. If you reach day 10 (without major screwups) and you still can't sleep during your naps, and/or you're still feeling terrible at night, something's wrong; you're not adjusting.

Although you should mostly or entirely stop feeling tired by the end of week one, **the imperative to keep to your schedule *exactly* remains until AT LEAST WEEK FOUR.** It's a scientific fact that it takes about a month for the brain to develop a new habit, and that's what you're doing here: Developing the habit of polyphasic sleep. It's a big habit to ingrain, and it doesn't stick easily; consistency is key. Remember that the habit of sleeping monophasically was ingrained in you, most likely, while you were an infant. And you've had that habit for how many years now? Don't think that breaking it is easy, or that a few days of sleeping differently will do it. Even a month is cutting it short -- I suggest at least two months of strict adherence before you risk fudging or modifying your schedule at all, unless you have good reason to believe that something *needs* changing with your schedule. I'll go over making those changes in the next section, but first:

This is where Everyman gets hard.

If you're adapting to a core-sleep / non-equiphasic schedule like Everyman, this -- the end of week one -- is where you pay your debt. Your first few days of adjusting weren't as difficult as those of people adapting to Uberman or Dymaxion, but now they're all done with the hard part, and you're not. There's probably still one, maybe two, times of day that you get really tired, and have to tailor your activities during in order to avoid falling asleep. This is normal, and it's not unusual for it to last several more weeks before you fully adjust. As long as you feel good the rest of the time, and aren't experiencing any symptoms of systemic sleep-deprivation (your memory is good, coordination is good, health is good, and you're sleeping well during at least most of your naps), then you're fine; keep it up and you will adjust. It can be wearying, but Everyman just takes longer -- that's its price.

You Know You're Adapting When...

- During more and more naps, you're able to:
 - Fall asleep quickly
 - Sleep deeply
 - Wake up feeling refreshed
- You begin to dream during your naps, eventually during several naps each day
- You don't yawn or feel tired during the day, except when it's almost time for your nap
- You feel clear-headed and wide awake during most of your waking night-time hours
- Your memory and motor skills are normal⁴⁴ (or with Uberman/Dymaxion, sometimes better than normal⁴⁵)

44 You may want to test your memory and motor skills before adapting, if you're worried that you might not realize when you're sleep-deprived or if you're adapting. I did this when I was testing the Everyman schedule. I memorized several poems before I took on the schedule, and took typing-tests every day for a week. Then, while I was adjusting, I could take a typing test or see how long it took me to memorize a poem, and know how I was doing. (This is partly why I know that the Everyman adjustment period drags on for a while -- it took about 6 weeks for my typing to recover to pre-adaptation levels, even though I felt fine after 3 weeks.)

45 Improvements in cognitive function have been reported from several people who adapted to Uberman/Dymaxion. I felt them, too, when I did it, but I did no tests to confirm the effect -- others have, though. No, I can't explain what would cause this. Perhaps the nap-only schedules are more efficient in a way that benefits the brain somehow.

...and...

You Know You're Having Trouble Adapting When...

After *at least one week* of perfect⁴⁶ adherence to your schedule:

- You regularly have trouble falling asleep, wake up in the middle of naps, or wake up exhausted, *during more than one nap a day*. If you're only having this problem for one specific nap, and another week of strict adherence doesn't solve it, then you probably just need tweaking (see next section).
- You yawn or feel tired frequently
- You feel muddy-headed and stupid all night, or during parts of the day (again, if it's just or mostly before or after one particular nap, and doesn't go away on its own, it may be fixable by tweaking).
- Your memory and/or motor skills are still "off" after several weeks of strict adherence

TWEAKING YOUR SCHEDULE

"Tweaking" is a term for making a minor adjustment to a polyphasic schedule. Specifically, once you've adjusted, if there's still a "rough spot", you tweak to fix it. Sometimes, a sleeper gets totally adapted, but still has problems feeling tired before or after one particular nap, or at a certain time of day, or related to a certain activity⁴⁷. When this happens, sometimes the schedule needs a "Tweak". This may involve moving a nap slightly, or changing the napping environment or other circumstances surrounding your sleep.

Polyphasic sleep is just like regular sleep when it comes to environment and lifestyle. Things like diet, the room you sleep in, and what you do before and after sleeping can have a definite, measurable effect on your sleep. What's more, polyphasic sleep is more efficient, so things that may not have affected your sleep while you were monophasic may have a noticeable effect on your new schedule.

I get a lot of questions about tweaking one's schedule, so let me start with the biggest part of almost all the answers: **About eight times out of ten, if you're having problems adapting, it's NOT because you need to modify your schedule.** Seven of those eight times, the problem is that you've been trying to cheat your way through the adjustment period -- Sleeping extra, skipping or moving naps, or plain oversleeping. *If you're doing that, then attempting to tweak your schedule will just make the problem worse.* There is no easy way to adapt to polyphasic sleep that I know of⁴⁸, and more importantly, if there is an easier way, then you -- "you" being a generic term for a new polyphaser -- probably aren't going to be the one to find it. Don't try polyphasic sleeping unless you intend to go through the adaptation, in all its suck and glory.

The other most common reason for adjustment problems is that there's an issue related to lifestyle that's interfering with your sleep. So before you mess with the schedule you've worked so hard to get (mostly) adapted to, check for things that may be interfering, and address them. (If there's more than one, address them one at a time, leaving at least a few days between changes.) With all changes, you should make one, stick with it for a few days (keeping notes if necessary or desired), and then assess whether the change should be kept, expanded upon, or reversed. The first day's effects of a change are not enough to judge it overall.

46 Or "amazingly close to perfect" -- one ten-minute oversleep doesn't nullify a whole week, but three hours does.

47 Such as being tired after eating.

48 See Appendix III if you want to read about a possibly-easier adaptation method that I've heard of but can't verify.

Keep in mind that what's making you tired may not be directly related to the nap closest to your tiredness: Something making a nap less efficient may be producing tiredness that doesn't show up until a nap or two later. If you're having problems, look carefully at *all* your behavior.

Before Tweaking the Schedule: Red-flag Behaviors that are Known to Interfere with Polyphasic Sleep

- Are you eating too close to a nap? Typically, polyphasers find that eating should be done right after waking up, or in the middle of a waking-cycle; not closer than an hour or two to the time you lay down. Digesting food in the stomach puts you in a deeper sleep and can make you not want to wake up, or wake up sluggishly. If you have digestion issues, they can also interfere with the quality of your sleep.
- Are you consuming caffeine? Some people are fine with small, controlled amounts of caffeine while sleeping polyphasically; others are not. If you're having problems and you consume caffeine, try limiting and/or changing the time of day that you consume your caffeine, and see if the "problem nap(s)" change in response. If so, you probably need to limit it or cut it out of your diet.
- Are you consuming alcohol or other drugs (including cigarettes)? Obviously these can affect your sleeping. Try abstaining and see if that fixes the problem. (If it's something you'll have a withdrawal from, you should probably quit sleeping polyphasically, quit the drug(s), and then try again later.) There's another section on Substances near the end of the book, too.
- Where and how are you sleeping?
 - Do you use a sleep track or sleep to music? If so, maybe you're not getting deep enough sleep due to the noise. If not, maybe you're sleeping too deeply because of the silence. That sounds circular, but for some people, having some noise on (especially at night) keeps them from sinking too far under; while for others it just "inoculates" them to noise and they sleep through their alarms. Being an individual is a b*tch, eh? ;)
 - Is your room too warm (which can make it hard to wake up) or too dark (ditto)? We all need our doses of darkness, but if you're sensitive to light and darkness, try getting your dark during the day (i.e. by using a sleep mask) instead of at night. I find that leaving a lamp on during my 8 p.m. nap really helps me wake up afterwards. Conversely, if you're too cold or it's too bright, you may not be able to sleep well enough.
 - Are you sleeping in your bed at night? This can be a bad idea, as your body is trained to "hibernate" in your bed (or wherever you normally sleep at night). At least for a while, try sleeping on the couch, in a recliner, or somewhere else that isn't as comfy and conducive to hours of Z's. Once you're fully adapted, you may find that you can go back to using your bed. (I did.)
- Are you exercising right before bed? This can interfere with the quality of some people's sleep. If you're not sleeping well for one or more naps, or having trouble waking up after them, try making sure you don't exercise strenuously too close beforehand.

If You Really Need to Tweak

IF ~

- You've been sticking to your schedule *without mistakes* for at least a week (Uberman) or two (Everyman) **AND**
- You can tell that you *are adapting* **BUT**

- There's still a place or two in your 24-hour cycle that you feel tired during, or a nap you have difficulty taking **AND**
- You've already tried modifying all the behaviors which may be causing the interference, **THEN**
You should consider "Tweaking" your schedule.

The Process

Tweaking a schedule is like troubleshooting a mechanical problem: You pick one small change that looks likely, make it, watch for a while, and if it doesn't work, pick another one. If a change that you made makes things worse, you reverse it, then go back to the beginning. In this case, the "changes" you're making are changes in your nap-times or durations. **Again, Nap Tweaking should be a last resort** -- it's so much easier to diagnose and fix behavioral problems, and much more likely that that will fix your problem. But for people on Everyman schedules especially, Tweaking is sometimes necessary in order to get things down smooth; and unlike the equiphasic schedules, which can be very touchy, minor tweaking usually doesn't "break" an Everyman schedule or keep it from working. (Be minimalist, though -- **all polyphasic schedules require more regularity and consistency than an average 8-hour monophasic schedule does.**)

If you have to Tweak, here are good places to start. Remember to make *one change*, and wait at least a few days to see if it should be kept, kept and built upon, or reversed, before making another. Also, consider writing down how you feel immediately before or after sleeping, for some or all of your naps. Small changes especially can be hard to keep track of, simply because they require you to be vigilant about noticing how you feel, often at times when you're at your least vigilant!

- If you are regularly tired after waking from a certain nap (and have addressed possible behavioral reasons), move that nap 15 minutes closer to the one before it. If this helps a little but not enough, move it another 15 minutes, for a total of no more than an hour.
- If you regularly have trouble falling asleep for a certain nap (and have addressed possible behavioral reasons), and are usually *not* tired right before this nap, move the nap 15 minutes farther away from the one before it.
- If you have trouble falling asleep and *are* tired right before your nap, consider shortening the duration of all your naps by 2-5 minutes, especially if they're currently longer than 20 minutes total. Some people do better with naps that are 18 or even 15 minutes long. This fix can also help if you're always groggy immediately upon waking up from some or all of your naps.
 - There's a tendency to want to lengthen your naps if you feel you aren't getting enough rest -- counterintuitively, this rarely helps. Although Dr. Fuller proscribed 30-minute naps for his "Dymaxion" schedule, in my experience and those of the many people I've spoken to, in the ballpark of 20 minutes always seems to work better. I would even go so far as to say that maybe Dr. Fuller was estimating ("about half an hour"), or that he was simply not the norm.
- If you're on Everyman and always tired after waking up from your core nap (and have addressed behavioral issues, which are very common surrounding a core nap), try taking it half an hour earlier. If you naturally have low energy at night, you may be pushing your waking-period too far and getting overtired.
 - If that doesn't work, try shortening your core by 15 minutes, then half an hour. If the problem persists, try lengthening it by 15 minutes. The 1.5, 3, and 4.5-hour suggested durations of core naps are based on a 90-minute sleep cycle, which is normal but not universal -- yours may be a little different. Sometimes even 5 or 10 minutes' duration of a core nap can mean the difference between waking tired and waking up refreshed. Pay attention to your body -- if subtracting 15 minutes helps but not very much, try 20.

- Don't be afraid to try other changes if you feel you need to. Just remember -- make them one at a time, and keep them small, and give a few days to each to see how it affects you. For some people, finding just the right schedule takes months of "detective work", but keep in mind that you're not tired during that whole month; just a little sleepy before or after a certain nap or during a certain time of day. For many people (including me), that still represents an improvement over how they felt on a monophasic schedule. And don't give up -- once you're adapted, you know you can sleep polyphasically, and it's just a matter of sanding off the rough edges. Your "perfect" schedule may take a little discovering, but it's there.

If Tweaking Doesn't Work

Sometimes, for some reason, even tweaking a schedule won't produce a situation where you're never tired. You may find that it's always a struggle to wake from your core or a certain nap, or that you always get a bit yawny around 3 a.m. no matter what you do.

There are two things you should do in this situation. The first is to **assess your health**: How do you feel? Are you feeling any worse as you continue to sleep polyphasically? While in my experience polyphasic sleep can work for almost anybody who wants it to, it is a more efficient method of sleeping, and not everyone has the constitution to increase the efficiency of an involuntary physical processes as complex as sleeping.⁴⁹

If your health is okay, though, and you don't feel (and have no evidence that) polyphasic sleep is doing any damage to you, then it's time to ask another question: **How do you feel compared to when you were monophasic?** Are you tired more or less of the time? Do you have more or less energy, and how is your stress level? If things are better for you being polyphasic, it may be worth it to deal with the occasional tiredness for however many months it takes you to figure out what will eliminate it. But if you generally don't feel as good, then maybe you're just a monophasic sleeper.

The trick is to know when to quit trying to adapt.

When To Give Up

There's a danger limit, which I've tried to mention regularly throughout this book; a limit to how much you can mess with a central biological process like sleep and not suffer any consequences. What's more, due to the nature of sleep deprivation, *you may not know* when you've passed that limit.

Therefore, it's extremely important to keep an eye on your progress, and to know when you need to quit, at least for a while. (I've said this already, but if you can find a sympathetic friend who understands what you're doing and won't jump the gun, it can be helpful to give them the power to make you call it quits.)

Generally speaking, **if you've been trying to sleep polyphasically for a month or more, and you can't keep to a regular schedule, then it's time to quit.** Whether you feel it or not, you're sleep-deprived from all the irregular sleep, and if you sleep irregularly for any longer, you risk training your mind and body to not sleep on a schedule at all. This can ruin your chances for a good night's sleep entirely, and even land you on medication or under medical care before your schedule can recover. So don't push it! If you didn't succeed at adapting this time, take a long break, take some notes, make careful preparations, and try again later.

⁴⁹ Most people without the constitution for polyphasic sleeping simply don't want to do it, in my experience -- they know, on some level, that they need and prefer longer, "slower" sleep. But it is possible that psychologically, you could desire to sleep polyphasically, but not be meant for it physically.

Needless to say, you should also quit if you experience any adverse effects, such as dramatic weight gain or loss, illness, or psychological meltdown. Those would be, you know, bad.

When you "quit", make sure it's for at least 60 days, and that you re-establish a regular monophasic or biphasic schedule for that whole time. While you're at it, too, why not make some observations about your "normal" sleep habits, with an eye to things that may have sabotaged your polyphasic attempt? A period of rest or quitting can be an ideal time to:

- quit caffeine or other stimulants or drugs
- improve your sleep environment
- establish good sleep habits
- modify your diet or exercise routine
- accustom yourself to living on a schedule, if you're not already used to it

Sometimes the second time is the charm, especially if you've learned from the first time and use the break to prepare. (The first time I adapted, I did it in one shot--which is good, because I might not have tried again!--but the next time, it took me two tries. My lifestyle was very different, and I didn't expect the problems I would have...but when I tried again, knowing what to expect, it worked.) So be smart about quitting when you should quit, and don't worry that it necessarily means giving up for good!

Effort

I didn't work this hard to maintain my old monophasic schedule; but then again that schedule was in tatters and I was almost always tired. I needed a good 9 hours of sleep on a monophasic schedule to feel rested, and the world never let me get it. Now I need an average of 4.5 hours...but I can *get* them, and still get everything else done! My polyphasic schedule isn't effortless, but it's certainly worth the effort.

V. Living Polyphasically

This section is devoted to issues that primarily concern polyphasic sleep as a lifestyle -- which, in my own personal definition, means "as done for more than four months consecutively". I pick four months because there seems to be a certain "swing of things" that kicks in after five to six months, so it seemed as good a place as any to distinguish long-term from short-term polyphasic schedules.

That's not to say that short-term polyphasic sleep isn't useful, or that everyone who adapts to a polyphasic schedule does or should do so with the aim of staying on it for years. But many people, once they get through the "Hell week" part of it, find that they like polyphasic sleep a lot, and say they will keep to the schedule as long as they can. Sometimes life interferes, but the good news is, once you've adapted successfully to a polyphasic schedule once, it seems to be easier to do it again. Someone in a polyphasic-related forum once theorized that maybe there's a "nap switch" in your brain, and once you flip that switch -- learn to nap, and use naps as an efficient replacement for nighttime sleep -- then you never really forget how. It was certainly easier for me to adapt to my schedule the second time around (once the lifestyle issues were resolved); I got the hang of (or remembered the hang of) falling asleep and waking rested much more quickly than I thought I would.

Polyphasic sleep in the long-term seems to be a much different animal than it is while you're adapting, and also somewhat different than it is for the first 6 months or so after adaptation. I'll address some of the things that have seemed notable, difficult or relevant to me as I've slept polyphasically over the last year and ten months; however, everyone is invited to remember that I'm one of very few people doing this at the moment, and there's no long-term study data at all on polyphasic sleep at the moment, so what follows is pretty much pure conjecture. Yay conjecture!

ON THE NATURE OF SCREWING UP

Do you know anyone who goes to bed at precisely, say, 10:42 every night, and wakes at exactly 5:23? Every single day? Me neither. Polyphasic schedules are super-strict by necessity while you're adapting to them, and even after that, they remain stricter than monophasic schedules, because they're more stripped-down and efficient. But it's not Perfectly Strict For All Time. And once you've really, truly got the hang of it, "screw-ups" that would have completely nuked your schedule in the past become quite easy to work around, and it all just blends together into a full-grown specimen of the genus *sleep schedule*. A weird specimen to be sure, but on many levels just like any other.

Here's an example: If I miss a nap, or move one too far out of its usual position in the day, I will start to get tired about 11 p.m. Always happens. If I stay up until 1 a.m. anyway, I will be quite resistant to waking up in the morning, and feel fine after my morning nap; but if I go to bed early, at 11:30, I'll be fine in the morning. In short, if I sleep 4.5 hours instead of 3, I can recover almost totally from having missed a nap (though I still feel a bit sluggish from oversleeping at first). If I just push through it and sleep the normal three hours, I'll recover as well, but only after experiencing some morning tiredness.

Another example: If I have to do something that will make me miss a nap or move it too far, and I know about it ahead of time, I may take a 10 or 15-minute nap beforehand. That'll keep me from being too tired, and I'll take my normal nap when I can, if I can. Depending on how that shakes out, I might be tired when I wake up from the next nap...

In other words, life on a polyphasic schedule is a steady dance of trying to keep your sleep-schedule on track so that you're not tired, and mitigating the tiredness when you can't avoid it. That may sound odd, but if you stated how a normal (monophasic) sleep schedule works, it would sound almost exactly the same. A monophaser might say, "If I'm stressed-out and can't get to sleep right away, then I'm going to be pretty wasted in the morning. If I can, I'll sleep in by 2 hours and that will help, but if I can't sleep in and I can't get a nap tomorrow afternoon, I'm going to be yawning all day." **The numbers are smaller with polyphasic sleep, but the principle – and it seems, at least in general, the ratios – are the same.**

Real life makes you modify your schedule on-the-fly sometimes; it just does. Polyphasic sleep is no different, once it's in full swing. The difference is the work it takes to *get* to "full swing".⁵⁰

And being fully adapted isn't an on/off thing either: For a while, you're going to have to use your brain to decide when to sleep and when not to, because your habits are still going to lead to you to want to sleep at night, even if you don't need to. After long enough, though, it becomes a "gut decision"; napping becomes your normal schedule, and you no longer tend to sleep all night, even if you want to (or try!).

I watch the clock much less now: When it's nearing bedtime I get tired, and for most of my naps I wake up automatically at the right time. For those naps that I tend to oversleep (because they happen at low-energy parts of my day, or because I'm likely to have had to move the nap prior), I use alarms and ~~a cattle prod~~ incentives to get myself up. ;) The best incentives remain those that are interesting: I'll start a project, prep some food to cook, or watch the first 15 minutes of a movie before I lay down, and then getting going again is usually a snap. Of course, I could just as easily have taken those steps to mitigate morning tiredness on my monophasic schedule, but one of the virtues of polyphase for me has definitely been that it makes me pay closer attention. I think it does this for a lot of people, and while that's awesome on a level, it's also problematic, because without real scientific study, it's hard to separate how much of the benefit of polyphasic sleep is the schedule itself, and how much is paying closer attention to how you sleep and how you feel!

On my blog, I talk very little about which naps I got or missed, and how I compensated for them. This is simply because it gets tiring, constantly saying, "THIS INFORMATION ONLY APPLIES IF YOU'RE MORE THAN SIX MONTHS IN." ...Most of my readers aren't. And even if I issue that disclaimer, it hardly ever works, and I end up getting a bunch of questions from people who want to make those kinds of modifications early on. (I don't mean to sound ungrateful -- I enjoy the questions I get, for the most part.) Almost nobody who reads my website is a long-term polyphasic sleeper (there are a few; but what do they need my advice for anyway?), and I felt that I was confusing too many of the readers I have who are trying to adapt.⁵¹ For people who are adapting (on any level), a screwup is a screwup -- it will make them sleep-deprived and delay, or ruin, their success at living on a polyphasic schedule. For the completely adapted, a (minor) screwup is just a blip on the radar that gets fixed later.

Why?

I've posited that there's a point--certainly not before four to six months--where some quantum leap happens and you "become polyphasic" on a biological level. I couldn't tell you why this happens--I didn't actually notice it happen--but after it happens, it becomes as hard to kick polyphase as it was monophasic. I say that having never *tried* to get off my polyphasic schedule, but I have done enough that should have knocked me off it that I feel it's pretty stuck on there! Since July 2006 when I started this schedule, I've been sick, twice with colds and once with a sinus infection, and slept for most of one to several days as a result. I've traveled several times, and been unable to get some or most of my regular naps for several days

⁵⁰ To be fair, this may not be different at all. Anyone who's trained a baby to sleep at night can tell you that consistency helps a lot there, too.

⁵¹ Plus -- I won't hide it -- I *hate* repeating myself. Pet peeve.

because of that. (*You* try sleeping crunched into the front seat of a VW Bug parked at a rest stop!) I've sat up all night with distraught family-members and then crashed for half the day. All of these things have made me tired (well, not so much sleeping all day while sick -- I was wasted anyway, then). Sometimes *very* tired. The tiredness comes at naptime and goes away if / when I get a few normal naps in. When I'm very tired and I "crash out", I may sleep as long as six hours.⁵² But when I wake up, I go back to taking my naps and my schedule evens right out. It's a bit eerie sometimes. ;)

Something else I've noticed, over the last year specifically, is that I get tired for my naps *regardless* of when else I've slept. So doing things like staying up late and crashing until 8 a.m. doesn't stop me from getting yawny at 9, because it's naptime. This Pavlovian sort of response seems designed to keep me on my schedule, just like the automatic response to get tired at night keeps monophasers on their schedules.

Because of this, I feel sometimes like I'm not a good role-model for people trying to adapt to a polyphasic schedule. I know that they need to concentrate rabidly on making *no mistakes* for as long as humanly possible; and yet if I make a mistake, I just shrug and keep going.

In other words, adaptation is hardcore. After that, things get a bit squishier. But getting used to the schedule brings its own challenges, too...

GETTING BORED

Besides the change in the nature of screwups, something else that tends to happen long-term is that boredom becomes a problem. Everyone I've spoken to who did long-term polyphase talked about, at one point or another, having to deal with being up at night and being boooooored and really wanting to just go to sleep and fast-forward some time.

I'm sure this doesn't happen to everyone. I bet Einstein could have stayed awake for days and days and not gotten bored, but most of us aren't lucky enough to have a brain that fascinating, and for even very industrious folk, living on a 20+-hour day is likely to get wearisome at times. **There's also a psychological component that shouldn't be ignored: Your *mind* can only handle so much stimulation**, and sometimes that feeling that you just don't wanna do anything is directly related to the fact that, mentally and/or emotionally, you've hit a limit to the experiences you can absorb for a while. I'm sure those limits, too, are different for everyone.

Needless to say, if the boredom is endemic or systemic, then you've got a bigger problem with being polyphasic⁵³ -- But it feels safe to assume that, if you were bored all the time, you wouldn't have reached the point of total adaptation, which is what we're discussing here. So we'll assume from here on that you may experience boredom, but only occasionally. In which case, you have a few options for how to handle it. Some of these ideas seem contradictory, but that's because different things work for different people...start with an educated guess and if that doesn't work, try something else.

- Follow a schedule. Sometimes you just get sick of *thinking of the next thing* to do - I know I do. Building a schedule, either for your entire day or just for the times you tend to get bored, can be an easy way out in that case.
- Pick a "default activity". This is a great, if somewhat obvious, idea if you're the type who loves to do a certain thing, or is in the middle of a big project: Make yourself devote any time that isn't already devoted to something else, to that thing. You'll get more done, and if you get sick of it for a while, it'll be incentive not to let yourself get bored. A win-win situation, really.

⁵² Unless I'm really ill, in which case all bets are off.

⁵³ One which is best solved by having a Big Fat List of things to do and/or a tight schedule to keep you moving, as discussed earlier.

- Whip out the icky stuff. Make a list of useful things you hate doing: laundry, bills, some irritating personal care requirement, or whatever. Label it "Bored List" or something more creative if you like, and do something off it whenever you get bored. If you're the right kind of personality, then having the list out there, looming with its Ick, will keep you from letting yourself get bored. And if you do get bored, well, at least something useful gets done. If you're not the right kind of personality, though, the presence of this list can lead you to doing not-good things, or oversleeping, in order to avoid having to pull out the list. (The list, in this case, is similar to my mom, who would give you chores if you complained of boredom. If moms like mine could motivate you, this probably will too.)
- Go low-key once in a while. If your problem is mental or emotional exhaustion⁵⁴, you may find yourself getting "bored", or entering a state where nothing you could do sounds palatable, even if you have lots of options and willpower. Sometimes the best thing is to stop trying to accomplish something, and put yourself in standby for a while. I like to read, with no music or computer or other electronic noise anywhere near me. Other people are happy watching a fish-tank, or walking aimlessly, or watching a movie. People need those things occasionally, and a lot of polyphasers get so involved in being hyper-efficient with their time that they forget to just chill once in a while. Make sure you don't waste too much time, though: set a timer or alarm, so your chill-out period is what you need and not too much more.
- Go ahead and sleep⁵⁵. Obviously, *be extremely careful* with this one, since you risk doing damage to that schedule you worked so hard on, and ending up with a bunch of tiredness to deal with later! Remember that on a polyphasic schedule, **more sleep isn't necessarily more refreshing**, so try to get away from thinking that "extra" sleep will somehow make you feel better later⁵⁶. Unless you're very careful, and possibly even if you are, extra sleep will actually make you feel more tired later, or at least you'll have some trouble waking up at some point. However, if you know your schedule and yourself well, you've probably figured out some place where you can fit some extra Zs if you want to, and not suffer for it. Even Uberman schedules seem to have those places, once they're done long enough. I suggest making a list of when it is and isn't acceptable to get any extra sleep (include times of day, durations, and things you want to definitely have accomplished first -- you'll be shocked how much time you lose to sleep, if you're used to polyphasic naps), so that you're not making the decision when you're bored and *want* to sleep. Also, make sure you don't use this option too often - once a week should be the maximum, really. "Loosening up" your schedule too much can lead to an erratic schedule and systemic tiredness -- it's less of a danger for adapted polyphasers, but you can't just give up on your schedule and do whatever either.

SCHEDULING AND Real Life

Ah, real life...it could almost be defined as "the stuff that gets in the way of plans", couldn't it? Long-term polyphasers are unique critters simply because they're rare enough that they're hard to group up (plus, that whole lack of formal studies thing) -- but they seem to run the gamut between carefully scheduling all their time, and scheduling little more than their naps. I'm probably a 7 out of 10 on the scheduling scale -- I have a proposed schedule for each day, that I modify as needed on an ongoing basis. But it doesn't matter how precise you are with your schedule, because nothing can stop Real Life from throwing its monkeywrenches in. The question is, when it does, how does a polyphaser handle them?

Sickness

Almost everyone gets sick sometimes. If you get sick terribly often or badly, you probably don't want to mess with polyphasic sleep anyway; but if you're a normal, healthy person, you probably still deal

⁵⁴ A good way to determine this is to look at what you've been doing all day -- If it's very brain-intensive, or difficult emotionally (i.e. if you're a professor or a therapist, etc.) then it's likely that that part of you is tiring out, even though your body isn't. You see this a lot in students, even monophasic ones, who are working a really intensive program: After doing it most of the day, they tend to shut down, and either stare at walls or get drunk.

⁵⁵ My gods, did I just say that?? ;)

⁵⁶ The obvious exception being if you're sick, in which case you DO need extra sleep. See next section for more on that.

with colds or allergies or what have you. (Though I'm not saying they're inevitable...I think many regular illnesses are caused by lifestyle. I'm currently at war against colds -- and I haven't had one for almost a year! My website has more on natural cold remedies and preventions, if that's something that interests you.) And there are things like the flu, food poisoning, and other contagions that sometimes you just get stuck with.

Sickness is the one instance where I've never advocated trying to keep to one's schedule -- be it polyphasic or monophasic or whatever -- and I've never tried to myself, either. Sickness is not something to mess around with, and it's well-known scientifically that sleep provides some of the best chance for your body to heal. It lets you shut down all non-essential functions and re-route the engines to life support, if you will. ;) And it's WAY healthier than taking drugs! So whatever your normal sleep schedule, if you've contracted some illness, forget about it -- sleep as often as you want and as long as your body will. Feel no shame about staying in bed all day if that's what feels right. I'm all about efficiency, right, but missing one day of work to sleep off an illness is way more efficient than missing four days because you wore yourself down to a stub.

Many people worry about getting their polyphasic schedule back after a period of illness, especially since societies tend to be monophasic, so it's naturally easier to fall back into a monophasic rather than a polyphasic schedule. I have one thing I've always done to help keep my polyphasic schedule, and with that, I've never had more than one night's tiredness while trying to "re-adjust" after I was well. That one thing is to **take naps on time**, always. If I sleep from midnight to 8 a.m. while sick, and wake up feeling energetic, I'll get up *and then go back to bed an hour later for my 9 a.m. nap*. I might not be able to sleep, but I lay down anyway, and set my alarm, and get up when it goes off. Any time I'm awake while it's "naptime", I lay down for my 20 minutes.

One thing that's different when you're sick, or getting sick, is that you probably *will* crash; rather than sleeping three or four hours, you probably will sleep seven or eight.

I even think it makes sense to sleep extra if you think you *might* be getting sick, provided you can tell. Some people don't notice illness until there are actual symptoms of it -- if that's true for you, then you have no way to benefit from a judicious long-nap-to-head-off-illness. In which case, don't try it, since you'll probably only fudge up your schedule. Personally though, I can feel when my immune system is strained or engaged in a heated battle. I usually get flushed in the face, my joints become sore, eyes are dry, and I often get vertigo. This happens when I work waaaay longer than normal, when I'm around people who are sick, or when I've been through something especially emotionally taxing. If I keep plowing through that feeling, I'm very likely to get ill. BUT if I take an extra nap or two, or a long core, I can almost always return things to normal.

Sleep is an *amazingly* effective remedy: I've found that if I can stay mostly in bed for one or two days, I can "kick" almost any illness I've got, usually with no more medication than lots of water and herbal tea. But this seems to work even better on a polyphasic schedule! **One amazing thing that seems to be true about polyphasic sleep is that LESS SLEEP DOES MORE to restore your body and mind to a healthy state.** On a monophasic schedule, I used to sleep 8-10 hours to help "fight something off", and 12 or more if I was truly sick. Over the last year and a half, those numbers have dropped to 4-6 hours for an effective immune-system boost, and almost never more than 8 hours consecutively, no matter how sick I am. Four hours' sleep feels like a full night to me; six hours feels like sleeping way in; and eight feels like hibernating!⁵⁷ Your results may vary of course, but it makes sense to me that once you get used to sleeping only as much as you need, usually (i.e. on a very efficient schedule like a polyphasic one), then sleeping a little extra goes a long way.

⁵⁷ Eight also has a detriment: If I sleep this long, my back will be *really* sore when I wake up. Ick!

The general rule that I espouse for periods of illness and near-illness is this: Your body needs sleep to heal. Give it! Keep taking your naps to stay in the habit, and worry about re-adjusting to less sleep after you're healthy. Re-adjusting usually is painless if you're already adapted; one day of extra sleep to combat illness does nothing to me; more than one day, and I'll be tired for a night, two at maximum. But it's nothing an interesting phone conversation or a good movie can't combat.

If you're adjusting, though, sickness will throw you off completely. Rather than sleep for one or two days and then try to jump right back into your adjustment, I suggest taking a break for at least a week. There are two reasons for this: One, you want to make sure you're *completely* healthy before you try again. And two, if you slept a whole day during your adaptation, your adaptation is pretty much over, so you need to re-stabilize your sleep before trying again.

Travel

It can be very hard to nap while traveling. I'm not a very frequent traveler, nor a very experienced one; perhaps someone more accustomed to the routine could find more ways to nap. But for me, the combination of strange places, different food, new things to do, stress, jet-lag, and the necessary nap-shifting that airports and activities can cause, throws me right off. I try to nap while I'm traveling, but mostly I just thank goodness that I don't travel more often, and prepare to have to re-adjust when I return. Re-adjusting gets easier the longer I'm on this schedule, too. (I should note that, though my schedule almost always gets mangled when I travel, **I don't "go back to being monophasic"**. In fact, in all this time I've *never* gone back to being monophasic -- I may inadvertently miss some naps, and as a result sleep extra when I do sleep, but I'm always, always careful to take my naps whenever I possibly can, and as a result, the worst I've ever gotten from travel is tired. Rather than sleeping all night and being awake all day, I tend to sleep longer when I do sleep, to compensate for the naps I miss. My schedule gets erratic, and I get tired, but I don't end up monophasic. Perhaps I would, if I willfully skipped my daytime naps while oversleeping at night, but I've always been careful not to do that. I worked hard to get here! If I lost my polyphasic schedule now, I'd be pretty devastated.)

On the upside, it seems that the esteemed Buckminster Fuller *was* pretty good at napping while traveling⁵⁸, and there are more and more nap-friendly destinations in the world these days. In many industrialized, technology-friendly countries like Japan, napping is becoming more and more mainstream, and a place to crash for 20 minutes is getting easier to find.

Emergencies

Life is never without emergencies for very long.⁵⁹ However, being polyphasic can come in very handy in the occasional emergency; or at least, it can be as useful as it is annoying. Needing to sleep every couple hours can be irritating if there's heavy stuff going on; on the other hand, being able to stay awake almost all the time can be a lifesaver. Sometimes, emergencies completely whack your schedule, by making it impossible to get naps, or impossible to sleep due to stress. Other times, they turn out to be perfect times to be polyphasic...

Emergency Uberman

If you can safely and regularly get your daytime naps, then transitioning into Uberman (from any variety of Everyman) is possible, and can be a wonderful tool. Nothing beats those 20-minute naps for helping you sit up all night with a sick kid.

58 At least, he traveled a good amount and was polyphasic for two years, so one assumes he was. Also, there is a brief anecdote about him being able to pass out on a plane for 30 minutes and wake up refreshed.

59 Some lives more than others -- if yours is rife with emergencies, then a strict sleeping-schedule may not be for you!

I've found that doing Uberman for one or two days (I've never had to do it longer, except when it was my regular schedule) is pretty easy under emergency conditions (the stress makes it pretty easy to stay awake), and it lets me effectively "not sleep" for as long as I have to, without penalty. There's no crash afterwards, either, unless it's emotional. (eek.) Simply skip your core(s) and take 20-minute naps every four hours, with as little variation as you can manage. If you're already on Uberman, obviously you'll want to get your naps if at all possible, since they mean the difference between being alert and fine (no matter how long you go without a night's sleep!) and being a bit of a zombie. If you've adapted to Uberman, though, you're probably used to telling the world to scram for a few minutes while you nap -- you just may have to say it more forcefully if the crap is hitting the fan in some way.

Probably the best thing to say about emergencies is to remember that one of the undisputed, frequent uses of polyphasic sleep is by the military, in situations where soldiers are stuck behind enemy lines for long periods of time and can't afford to sleep for hours. Don't feel guilty about drawing a parallel between that and doing time in the hospital waiting-room: Some may stare, but most people would be impressed with your fortitude if they knew you were napping so that you could stay awake near-continuously for days (even months!) on end if you had to.

If you like to "be prepared", then don't forget to include a timer (and eye-mask, if you use one) in your emergency kit! (I keep some in my car.)

Summing Up: Re-Adjusting

If you were fully adapted and you kept taking your naps whenever possible, **re-adjusting** after an illness, vacation, emergency, or similar "real life intrusion" is actually, in my experience, very easy.⁶⁰ Simply pick your old schedule (sleep-schedule and daily schedule, if you have one) back up as soon as you can. If you're worried about tiredness, make another Big Fat List of things to keep yourself occupied with. Usually in 1-3 days, you're right back to being fully adapted, and the transition is never as bad as it was when you first adapted -- or hasn't been for me, anyway, and I've lost track of how many times I've readjusted due to travel, emergency, or other SNAFU. The only time you *need* to avoid those things is during adaptation; the rest of the time, it's just a matter of convenience.

Paradoxically, polyphasic sleep seems to me to be more flexible than monophasic when it comes to these types of things. A monophasic person can miss a whole night's sleep, or get broken sleep, and feel like poop, but be functional -- once. If they have to do it for another day, or more, things deteriorate rapidly. On the other hand, broken sleep for me is no big deal: If I can fit a nap in at all, I will recover significantly; two naps at a proper interval and I can erase a whole day's sleep debt, usually. If I miss sleep, all I have to do is catch an extra nap, or an hour and a half core, to really recover back to almost right where I was. *And* I can maintain that for days, even weeks, without suffering too badly in terms of performance or health. So while my schedule is arguably easier to mess up than a monophasers (but is it? they have to be asleep all night in order to be rested...), it's also a lot easier to fix, and it's more resilient to things being whacked-out for short periods of time, and it requires less sleep overall to recover from a period of off-kilter or missed sleep.

EATING, EXERCISE & SUBSTANCES

I get a lot of questions about diet and exercise, and I wish I knew the answers to more of them, or that I could provide more foundation for the answers I do know than, "This is what happened to me," or

⁶⁰ It may be slightly more challenging if you're on the Uberman schedule; and for any schedule, it gets more challenging the longer you were "off". And it's significantly harder if you stopped napping during the day entirely. But even if you have to fully re-adapt, it's going to be easier than it was the first time. If you were fully adjusted, then three days of sleeping perfectly on your schedule should get you right back to where you were.

"This is what others have told me." (To be fair, I can also use "My mom is a nurse" and "I make herbal medicines in my kitchen sometimes", but nobody seems really impressed by those either. ;) But this is what I know, and what I've learned, that could be useful:

- **Can I eat anything I want, when I want?** It's nothing new that eating affects your sleep, but as with most things, the sleep-consequences are more noticeable on a polyphasic schedule. You shouldn't eat too close before a nap, it's pretty universally agreed-upon, because you'll sleep either too hard or not well, depending on your body's digestion process. You should be careful with stimulants like caffeine and sugar, and use them sparingly and with an eye to your sleep-times, if at all. ...Other than those things, I'm not aware of any restrictions being polyphasic imposes.
- **Can I be vegan / vegetarian / macrobiotic / etc?** As far as I know, yes. Some successful polyphasers have been vegetarians, even vegans. The only restriction seems to be that you can't be adapting to a new diet and a new sleep schedule at the same time -- that's a common New-Years-Resolution-y thing that people seem to want to try, but it just never works. I think maybe people only have so much willpower, and each of those endeavors probably uses it all! ...I should also add, though, that there's no evidence that being vegetarian / vegan / etc. gives you an advantage in polyphasic sleeping. Some people claim that eating meat (or whatever) makes one's digestion sluggish or something, making polyphasic sleep difficult, but as the majority of successful polyphasers are still omnivores, I just don't think that can be true.
- **Can I drink pop / coffee / corn syrup / insert unhealthy thing here?** In moderation, it seems so. I drink coffee, but only about 2 cups a day, usually of half-caff, and the rest decaffeinated; and I always have it pretty close to when I wake up from a nap. (I just like the feeling of waking up and drinking coffee, I suppose.) Too much sugar will mess me up, by making it difficult to fall asleep and then even more difficult to wake up; this was true before I was polyphasic as well. You may want to seriously consider opting for low-caffeine and low- or no-sugar varieties of whatever your poison is, but you already knew you should do that anyway, right? Right.
- **What about huge meals, like at holidays?** Yeah, that's a tricky part for me -- eating too much makes me groggy as heck, and it's very hard to wake up from whatever the next nap is. If you're well-adjusted, you may choose to sacrifice your efficiency today in favor of four slices of Aunt May's famous pie, and you'll probably recover just fine later on (as long as you stick to your schedule afterwards -- don't let one goofed-up nap cascade into many). If you're adjusting, though, you may want to go lightly, since a big meal will really slow you down.
- **I am a crazy good athlete. Should I be polyphasic?** Er, I get my exercise and I like my martial arts, but I'm nowhere near "athlete" status, and I don't think I know any polyphasers who are, either. If you're a professional or semi-professional athlete and you want to change your sleep schedule, there's probably a coach or doctor out there whom you should ask about it first, or who should at least monitor your performance to make sure it comes back to full after your adaptation. (And if you do this, please let me know, just to satisfy my curiosity!)
- **I have a pretty hard exercise regimen. Can it be compatible with polyphasic sleep?** Okay, my exercise regimen isn't what I'd call "hard" either, but in this case I *have* spoken to people who qualify, and it seems that the answer is "yes, with some extra attention to the details". You shouldn't work out very hard right before a nap, or you'll crash and want to oversleep -- make sure you have at least half an hour to cool down first. And you may have problems if your regimen includes chunks of activity that are so long they can't help but run into a nap -- if you run hours-long marathons, for instance. You'll want to be careful about working out while adapting, though there's no reason I know of that you shouldn't do it, unless you might hurt yourself with a lack of coordination or concentration (maybe you could arrange to be supervised during this time). Lastly, it seems that any advanced workout regimen works best when done on a regular

schedule, so in light of that, it seems like it wouldn't be too hard to become adapted to a combination of polyphasic sleep and exercise that could be done as a regular routine.

- **I regularly ingest some substance that affects me physically; can I keep it up?** ...Okay, I'm using this space to simultaneously answer questions about prescriptions, herbal supplements, recreational substances, and what have you, because, lacking research on any of the specifics, the answers are the same: It's probably easier and better if you don't, but if you have to, be minimal and watch carefully for effects on your sleep; and if you're serious about adopting polyphasic sleep, be prepared to have to make some changes. Some things are obviously more likely to be problematic than others – If you take tranquilizers or are fond of cocaine, you're going to have more trouble⁶¹ than a weightlifter who takes creatine or a woman using black cohosh for menopause symptoms. A good rule of thumb is, “Does it affect your sleep now?” If so, the effects will be multiplied on polyphasic sleep, and that may preclude your being able to adjust or maintain the schedule. If it doesn't usually affect your sleep, though, it still might when you become polyphasic; however, the effects are more likely to be mild.

The “CRASH THEORY”

Every once in a while, someone asks me if polyphasic sleep should include a “crash day”, usually interpreted to mean a day of (sometimes forced) long sleep – 12 or even 24 hours. I believe this idea originates with one of the famous American scientists, who was reported to almost never sleep, but then would crash out for almost a full day once a week or month or something. (When it comes to pre-recording-device historical figures, sleep data is almost always speculation, and usually varies by source, I've found.)

Source notwithstanding, I have no reason to believe that this is either wise or possible. For one thing, a well-adapted polyphaser *can't* crash in the way that's described – to sleep that much would require having built up a significant sleep debt, and if you've done that, then you're not adjusted.

Actually, here's an interesting fact for you: **It seems that polyphasers, when they “sleep in”, can only sleep about 150% longer than the usual daily amount of sleep.** I make this conclusion based on two facts: When I was on Uberman, during the very rare occasion that I slept in, I would naturally sleep three hours. I've heard this from other Ubersleepers as well. And now that I'm on Everyman, getting a total of four hours' sleep per day, if I decide to sleep until I can't any more, I typically sleep almost exactly six hours. (Sometimes a little less, very occasionally a little more if I've recently missed a nap or two.) Of course, if one were to *keep* sleeping in, especially in conjunction with skipping naps, that number would increase – but as far as one-day sleepfests go, the 150% ratio seems to hold in general.⁶²

Also, the *concept* of a “Crash Day” seems to be based on the reasoning that polyphasers are missing something that, if they let themselves sleep at will, their bodies would “make up”. Again, this simply isn't true, based on everything I know. The best theories I've heard about detriments associated with polyphasic sleep have focused on missing out on things that are incidental to sleep: Laying down, or darkness, or a ceasing of mental activity – but I can't see the mind/body sleeping for half a day to make those up. (I have found that I feel better, as a long-term polyphaser, if I wear a sleep mask during my naps (so that I get some darkness), if I prop my feet up and hang out on the couch for an hour or so at night (feels good to “lay” down for a while), and if I meditate to drown out the constant brain-noise (but this was always true, whether I was polyphasic or not). But I think in the last year and a half, I've only

61 Extreme examples, of course -- at least in the case of the *abuse* of either of those substances, there'd be no way in South Cleveland that you could ever adapt. But you knew that.

62 Does it also hold for monophasers? If so, it could explain why people who typically sleep 8 hours can oversleep to 12...

slept for longer than six hours when I was ill, and I think I slept 12 hours once when I was *really* ill with a sinus infection last year.)

In short, if you're on your schedule, stick with it – that seems to be the best way to ensure that you get enough rest and sleep from it. And if you can crash for 12+ hours, you're more than likely doing something wrong!

Physical Effects

The question, "Are there physical effects to long-term polyphasic sleep, and what are they?" is a screechingly difficult one to answer right now. To know if there are side-effects that may present themselves to a significant portion of the population requires research. However, I can speak about it in generalities based on what I know, and I can speak to my own experience. Hopefully there will be more and better information soon.

The physical effects of the adjustment period are fairly well-known (see the chapter on Adjustment). And it's fairly certain by this point that there are no, or at least no common, nasty effects to living on a polyphasic schedule long-term. Buckminster Fuller did his Dymaxion schedule for two years while under medical supervision, and was found to have no problems. I've gotten regular checkups over the course of my experiment and I, too, seem to be fine. Neither I nor the others I've spoken with who've lived on Uberman for 6 months or more noticed any negative effects that seem to be a result of the sleep schedule itself.

As far as "effects, period", these seem to vary by person, but the ones I hear about a lot are almost certainly tied to lifestyle. A lot of us who sleep polyphasically spend a large chunk of our time on the computer, so dry eyes and stiff necks are a common gripe. (Mine go away if I don't overdo it.) The only other effect I've heard about from more than one person is a change in body weight:

Weight Gain and Loss

Reports of weight loss or gain aren't uncommon -- I've actually experienced both. On Uberman, I was up and running a good chunk of the time I was awake, and often didn't eat until I was really, really hungry -- I'd just get too busy, especially to stop by the cafeteria. By the end of the experiment I was having to make a point of eating at least two large meals a day to stop the weight loss. (It wasn't dangerous, but you could see some ribs for a while.) Two large or five small meals would keep me at the right level. Conversely, when I adapted to Everyman, in the comfort of a well-stocked home, I gained a few pounds and first had to put limits on my snacking. Eating does wake you up somewhat, but obviously it isn't wise to fall back on that too often!

Overall, people's eating habits generally change on a polyphasic schedule, but not overmuch. Being awake more often, you need to eat a bit more, or at least a bit more often, lest you do things like eat breakfast at 4 a.m. and then not get anything else until lunch at 1 p.m.⁶³ I prefer small, frequent meals anyway, so I just try to eat healthy and keep my portions small, and eat whenever I feel like. The trickiest part is adaptation: You don't want to deprive yourself, or make any major changes in diet, while you're adapting; but you don't want to pig out and/or develop bad habits, either.

⁶³ Totally tangential point: I've also had this problem with brushing my teeth, believe it or not. If you're used to doing this task "before bed" and "upon waking", you might end up doing it at, say, 1 a.m. and 4 a.m., and then not brushing all day until 1 a.m. again! For my part, I had to get used to brushing my teeth at work, about 4 p.m.

There is an obvious possible secondary use of polyphasic sleep here, too, which hasn't been explored: If you want to lose a little weight, you could adapt to a polyphasic schedule while making an effort to keep your eating habits, or at least your caloric intake, exactly the same. (I'm not sure if that would be particularly easy, mind.) Theoretically at least, you should burn more energy while consuming the same calories and thus lose weight. I have no idea if anyone's ever tried it, though. I would urge some caution trying it with Uberman, since the weight loss seems to be at least potentially more dramatic, and with more risk that it could be unhealthy.

Sleep Disorders, Cessation Of

Will polyphasic sleep cure your sleep disorders? Well...to say that it *does* is a big claim to make, and I'm certainly not making it categorically, nor denying that it would need a lot more research to be actually substantiated. But I'll say that it *can*.

As with the rest of this book, I'm just telling what I know. The fact is that I know that polyphasic sleep (done properly) can have a positive, or even miraculous-seeming, effect on common sleep disorders. This may be because a large part of many sleep-disorders has to do with bad sleep habits, failed sleep rhythms, and general difficulties getting attuned to one's sleep cycle (or having one that isn't whacky). Polyphasic sleep has, I think, the effect of erasing the entire whiteboard of your sleep-cycles and rewriting it from scratch, in a strict and therefore stable way.

In myself, this "cured" the insomnia I'd been struggling with for months when I first tried it, as well as eliminating the nightly bad dreams, frequent night terrors, and bouts of sleepwalking / sleep-trashing-my-room I'd been experiencing. And when I say "cured", I mean that the very day I started actually being able to fall asleep for my naps and wake up from them without being a zombie – probably by the end of the first week – all of my sleep problems were *gone*.⁶⁴ As I said, I don't find this quite as surprising now as I did when it happened (shocked me to my *toes* then), but what I still *do* find surprising is that, except for the occasional minor instance, none of those sleep issues – some of which I'd had for many years – came back *at all*, not even during the periods when I went back to monophasic sleeping.

Another "cure" I experienced that was related to sleep (though I wouldn't call what was cured a "disorder"), was a cessation of the severe musculoskeletal pain that I'd been suffering. This pain was probably related to my not sleeping well (as well as to heavy computer use), but before I first tried Uberman, it was common for me to wake up every single morning with sharp pains in some area of my neck and shoulders, restricted motion, and general agony. I ate a lot of Ibuprofen, and dealt with it. But sleeping in short naps, without all the tossing and turning and ending up in weird positions, worked wonders for that. Unlike my "real" sleep disorders, however, the soreness *did* come back when I returned to monophasic sleep. It went away again when I successfully adapted to Everyman. At least for me, there seems to be a chiropractic benefit to not sleeping too long in one shot.

Regarding actual sleep disorders at least, I've seen and spoken to other people whose frequent nightmares, morning exhaustion, sleep movement and other problems disappeared when they adapted to a polyphasic schedule. (I've never spoken to someone who had apnea and tried polyphasic sleep, unfortunately.) And it would certainly seem that polyphasic sleep, if other factors don't contraindicate it, is a pretty safe thing to try, if you have one or more sleep disorders. Personally, I'm in favor of trying any kind of lifestyle change that might work to cure a problem, before resorting to drugs. The only caution I'll offer⁶⁵ is that, while *properly* adapting appears to sometimes have these wonderful effects,

64 Actually, all my sleep problems were gone from the very first day, technically speaking. I was sleep-deprived for a week, but since I wasn't sleeping during that time, I wasn't having any sleep-disorders either. Maybe what I should say is, "I've never had a sleeping disorder manifest during a 20-minute nap."

65 ...again...

“experimenting” without the necessary strictness (failing to adapt) can make many sleep problems even worse, by throwing off what schedule and good habits you *did* have. So if you have one or more sleep disorders and are interested in trying polyphasic sleep to alleviate them, be responsible and be sure you plan your adaptation carefully.

Dreaming

This one belongs on the cusp of physical and psychological changes, doesn't it? Much of what happens regarding dreams is individual, but there are a few things you can count on: For example, you will stop dreaming during the beginning of the adaptation process. This is probably a physical effect of sleep-dep, and the fact that when you are managing to sleep, you're falling straight into a very deep sleep – this will last until your body gets accustomed to the naps. Most polyphasers consider "dreaming again" to be a good sign that their adaptation is progressing.

Also, almost everyone I've ever talked to notices an increase in the vividness of their dreams, when they first begin having them again. I was no exception. I'm unable to determine whether this vividness is caused by the strictness of the schedule, the exactness of the amount of sleep had, or something else, but I am fairly certain that it isn't caused (only) by sleep deprivation. The reason for that conclusion is that, now that I'm adapted, if I miss naps or end up very tired, I sleep very heavily and generally don't remember my dreams; they return to being clearer and more memorable when my schedule is on-track. (It might be accurate to say that sleep-deprivation is the cause of vivid dreams during the adaptation phase, however.) The vividness tends to decrease a little after one has been polyphasic a while, but how much is up for debate. I still have several dreams that I can remember every day, and while it seems to me that I can remember them clearly, it's hard to say how clearly you remembered your dreams two years ago (can you answer that question?), so as to whether they're still as vivid as they were, I'm afraid I don't know.

Dreams can seem...omnipresent, too, for the first few months of being polyphasic. Part of the transition into a polyphasic lifestyle is getting used to sleeping many times a day, and that means getting used to *dreaming* many times a day. This can be very weird at first, since your dreams often don't seem any shorter when they come during naps (in fact, many of mine felt longer).⁶⁶ It may also be easier to remember your dreams, because you wake up so soon after going to sleep. I've gotten used to having (remembering) between 2-4 dreams a day, and this doesn't mess with my head anymore -- but during both of my adaptations, I remember thinking it was really weird at first. Like having a second life! This is made even more striking by the occasional "ridiculously long dream" that polyphasic adapters often report having -- a dream that seems to last for weeks, months, or even *years* of subjective time. For my part, I tended to have these before I was ever polyphasic, and I had quite a few of them during the adaptation process, but they've lessened in frequency since. In general, it seems that dreaming, like many other functions, gets shaken up during the adaptation process, and settles down (though not exactly the way it was) once you're used to the new schedule.

Lucid Dreaming. Lucid dreaming is a fascinating phenomenon that involves achieving a degree of wakefulness without interrupting a dream. There are a great many people who have an interest in this phenomenon, and most of them wish to bring it about more often. (Anyone who's had one will probably understand why -- they're insanely cool.) Because lucid dreams tend to happen more readily when the body is stressed or the sleep is unusually deep and/or fitful (exactly the circumstances under which we tend to have very vivid dreams), it's been said that sleep deprivation may help bring about lucid dreams. Sleep dep, as well as other methods for unbalancing the body, are sometimes used as temporary measures

⁶⁶ This might also contribute to the time-dilation effect – when you're having what feels like three days' worth of dreams every day, it's easier to lose track!

so that a practitioner can have a few lucid dreams and then, if they know what they're doing, learn to recognize them and bring them about in normal sleep.

Many people report an increase in "lucid" dreaming activity during the beginning of their adaptation, during or just after the adjustment period. (For people who aren't familiar with the phenomenon, it can be a very powerful and/or unsettling thing to suddenly have lucid dreams -- they are, however, totally harmless as far as I know.) I find this unsurprising, and moreover I'm glad there's *some* perk to alleviate the ickiness of that kind of sleep-deprivation!

Several people I've conversed with have told me, with great excitement, how useful polyphasic sleep could be, if you were really into lucid dreaming and wanted to work on it. For one thing, you'd have up to six chances a day! Also, maybe a polyphaser's dreams remaining more vivid (depending on the polyphaser and on the schedule) even after adaptation is a sign that lucid dreaming would indeed be easier to bring about on a polyphasic schedule. Unfortunately, I've never known anyone who's primarily used polyphasic sleep for that. From what I know about lucid dreaming, it's probably difficult enough that trying to master it while simultaneously becoming polyphasic is just too much.

My recommendation, which you should take with a grain of salt since I'm no expert in lucid dreaming, is this: If you're interested in studying or experimenting with lucid dreaming, I imagine it would be more useful to get the hang of the basics of lucid dreaming first, and *then* do your polyphasic adaptation (preferably to Uberman, for maximum effect). By "the basics", I mean getting used to writing down your dreams immediately upon waking, and developing a routine of asking yourself a trigger question, such as "Am I awake?" on a regular basis. (Google will give you much better information on lucid dreaming than I ever could, though.) And for goodness sake, if you pull it off, please let myself or one of the Polyphasic group-maintainers know!

Psychological & Social Effects

There's no way I'm going to be able to cover all of the possible effects here, so forgive me in advance. Being polyphasic does many, mostly subtle, but definitely interesting things to your mind. For the most part, they seem to be neutral, with a few positive and a few negative possibilities lurking in the wings. If you take good care of yourself, all the evidence I know suggests that you should be just fine (or better off) mentally as a result of adopting a polyphasic schedule.

Sleep is a different animal when you get it in small chunks. Some of the ways in which this manifests are obvious immediately; others take a while to notice. And I think it's difficult to appreciate how vital a chunk of your life sleep *is* until you make a big change to it. This means that, naturally, the effects of making such a change will likely differ from person to person.

Changes in the Perception of Time

However, some things are predictable and seem to happen to nearly everyone: A shift in how time is perceived is one of them. It can be hard to remember, or understand, that time is entirely a product of the human mind; but boy, this'll remind you! **Dilation** is the most common, and I think the most striking, effect: Days get longer, far more than it seems like 4-6 extra hours can account for. Sometimes they seem to last for a week! When I was on Uberman, I frequently asked what day it was, got an answer, and replied, "What, *still?*", or was genuinely worried for a minute that it was *next* Monday already and my homework was late! Naps, too, dilate greatly -- one 20-minute nap can seem like it lasts hours -- though I seem to have gotten used to this now, and my naps no longer seem as ridiculously long

as they used to, except for the occasional weird one. Someone posited to me that naps can seem so long because your brain is used to a certain amount of time passing while you're asleep, and this certainly sounds like a plausible explanation. Either way, it can be very strange when it happens, but most people seem to think it's nifty to feel like they've been asleep for many hours, and find out that only 20 minutes have passed.

The other thing that can happen to one's perception of time is that it can seem to simply go **haywire** for a while. It's not unusual to need "backup" help keeping track of time for the first six months. Watches and calendars are your friend! Also, when doing Uberman, it can be amazingly hard to figure out if it's night or morning, and of what day: Is it dark at 5 p.m. or still dark at 5 a.m.? Is this midnight going-into-Monday or coming-out-of-Monday? When exactly does it stop being Tuesday and start being Wednesday, if you're basically awake for all of it? I solved this problem by giving names to the nights -- I picked an arbitrary time for the day to end in the evening and begin in the morning, and then named the periods between the days. (I had a list called "Times of Darkness", and it was *such* wonderful, pseudo-poetic college stuff...I wish I still had it!) This made it much easier to keep track, as opposed to just trying to notice a single switch at midnight.

Euphoria

This is doubtlessly one of the weirder effects. I'd have discounted it as "experimentation glee" on my part, if it weren't for the many people in the years since who've reported the same effect. This only seems to happen with Uberman (possibly Dymaxion), but it seems that polyphasic sleep can cause a sustained state of mild euphoria. It doesn't make you "high", to be clear. (Well, at first the sleep dep will, but that's not a high most people find enjoyable.) This euphoria is a sense of very sharp clarity, fluid mental acuity, and general feeling at ease. It is, to be cultural and silly a moment, somewhat like realizing you're in *The Matrix*: Everything slows down; you feel like you're functioning much faster and better than the world around you. For me, this feeling came and went for several months, sometimes sticking around for days at a time. I've heard roughly the same reports, not from everyone, but from the majority of people who adapted successfully to Uberman, and all of them who adapted successfully the first time they tried to. (I have no idea what a first-try adaptation has to do with it, but literally everyone I've known who's pulled one off⁶⁷ has reported the euphoria. Non-first-try adapters seem to experience it less often.)

The euphoria is great, as most euphorias are. However, if you're just in it for the consciousness-polished-to-a-mirror-shine feeling, you might want to reconsider: Uberman especially is really hard to pull off, and while I (and others) think it's worth it for what it can do overall, it probably isn't worth all that trouble just to feel zingy for a while. But that zingy feeling sure is a nice reward for all the hard work!

Changes in your Social Life

Unless you're a loner, your social life is almost certainly going to change when you adopt a polyphasic schedule. I've already mentioned that if you're a Party Hard type, you may have problems adjusting to the need to "put the world on hold" every couple hours and sleep -- and this is probably true of anyone who leads a very world-immersed life. On the other hand, if you take a break from your freneticisms while you adapt, and then go back to it with your new schedule in place and your new needs in mind, even a hectic lifestyle might not be a problem. Something to watch out for, though, is if you *don't* lead a particularly hectic life, you're going to end up **spending a greater percentage of your time alone** than you might be used to. (If your life is super-busy, you may be able to just fill in all the time you gain from your new schedule doing what you normally do. This is rare, however: Most people end up with at

⁶⁷ Not that that's very many people.

least some free time that they have to spend alone.) If you don't have a solitary hobby or three, you may want to adopt one.

Also, if you have family around, you may have to adjust to **spending a bit less time with them** overall -- you're going to take an hour or so worth of naps during the day, and make up for it with several hours of available time that'll usually come while everyone else is asleep. Some people have found that this makes them lonely, or doesn't work with their family life. (It doesn't affect mine, at least not for now -- two of my three daily naps happen when my daughter's not around anyway, and the third I take right after she goes to bed. I do miss a little of the time I used to spend with my husband in the evenings, but we make an effort to make up for it.)

Learning to Love Sleep

Many people who adapt polyphasic schedules do it at first because they have some degree of difficulty getting a good, monophasic night's sleep. Some, like myself ten years ago, have gotten to the point of simply *hating* sleep and wanting as little to do with it as possible -- and if you've had sleep-troubles for a long time, this is, I think, a perfectly normal way to feel. However, on a polyphasic schedule, once the icky part is over, you may find yourself liking sleep again. The reason is that you'll have gone from trying to sleep at one time per day and (to some degree) failing, then feeling tired for all or most of the rest of the day; to feeling tired at specific times, and answering that feeling with immediate, restful sleep. Even the most die-hard sleep-haters usually find themselves with a different opinion, a few months in: Suddenly it feels *good* to sleep; it directly addresses and cures your tiredness, and it's painless (maybe much more so than you were used to), and it doesn't even take long!

The only caveat here is to beware sleeping in because suddenly you like to sleep -- disliking sleep can make adaptation easier, because you don't have much urge to oversleep; but then, when you stop disliking sleep, you can sometimes find yourself fully adapted but having to fight off the *psychological* (pleasure-driven) desire to sleep.

Being A Weirdo

Being seen as a weirdo is nothing new to me, so I tend to gloss over that effect, which is why I'm making a point of mentioning it explicitly here. If you sleep polyphasically long enough, you will get some attention over your schedule, whether you want it or not. You can hide it, but since being polyphasic involves napping during the day, it's likely to come up eventually, and you're going to get peppered with questions and probably judged a minor lunatic at least a few times. Now, I'm hardly a social juggernaut, but I've learned to smile and shrug it off, so you probably can, too.⁶⁸ But if you don't want to have to, then definitely think twice about being polyphasic. If you just want to have all such conversations over with as quickly as possible, consider memorizing or carrying a short description of polyphasic sleep (like the one in the Cheat Sheets section) that you can deliver on-demand. Some people may still want to ask questions, but lots of them won't.

Just in case they help anyone, here are some of the things I've learned to say, to brush off or minimize the "Look it's a circus freak" effect. Mind you, in a perfect world we would all smile and say, "This works for me -- what of it?" and never apologize for anything...but the real world often isn't perfect, not all of us are comfortable confronting the curiosity of the masses head-on, and there's no harm in the occasional white lie if it saves you some trouble, right? Right.

⁶⁸ This may be too flippant of me: I get a lot of practice "shrugging it off", whenever I get caught writing in my own language, practicing kung fu, or making sculptures out of old RAM. If you're used to being Miss or Mister Impeachable Character, it may really present a challenge. Or maybe not; maybe it'll just be a refreshing change!

- Nothing better than a good nap! (if you don't have to admit to *only* napping -- this way you don't look any weirder than anyone who's ever taken *a* nap somewhere, and that's most people.)
- Ah, sleep is for the weak! (if you do have to admit it -- I find that throwing in a "I'm off my rocker and thrilled about it" grin will get most people to mumble something inoffensive and scurry away asap.) You can also try quoting Ben Franklin, "There will be sleeping enough in the grave!", or make up a witty retort of your own. Just remember, if it's *too* witty, you may get stuck explaining it.
- It's just an experiment I'm trying (add "for class", "for a friend", "for my doctor", etc. as you feel you need to, for legitimacy -- people are less weird about an "experiment" that has some external cause)
- Or, if you get caught somewhere you don't often go, you can beg off as not feeling well. This has always worked for me in a pinch, when I need to get people to leave me alone about it, stat. This is actually my stock "oh-look-I'm-in-some-random-parking-lot-sleeping-in-my-car-and-somebody's-decided-to-knock-on-my-window" response.

...Or, and this is probably healthiest in the long run, you can just get used to being a weirdo. It's good for you -- helps you appreciate your own individuality. If it's practical, I highly suggest just going ahead and being weird. (For one thing, I need the company.)

VI. Philosophical Implications

What are the philosophical implications to the issue of polyphasic sleep? This is probably a little-addressed question because for many people, the phrase "philosophical implications" causes instant heartburn -- and that's fine, but I'm not one of those people; in fact philosophy is one of my very first loves. I was in the process of studying it formally when I first tried Uberman, and I still am! So, while it's perfectly alright if others don't care to read or ponder this section, I am, in the grand tradition of philosophers everywhere, going to write it anyway. ;)

The first question to be addressed is, of what *kind* are the philosophical implications that a sleep schedule might have? Traditionally, sleep has had a "monkeywrench effect" on any theory of consciousness; it makes a great example to bring up whenever someone claims something akin to Descartes' "I think, therefore I am" -- oh yeah? Do you stop existing when you sleep? -- or posits any theory that doesn't take our periods of personal darkness into consideration. Philosophers have argued amongst themselves about whether sleep constitutes being totally blacked-out and gone, or whether the mind retires to some other realm to contemplate by itself; and what these different views of sleep mean for their pet theories of consciousness.⁶⁹ In these cases, though, sleep is a philosophical *tool* rather than its subject, and I think there's room for it to be a subject, too. Specifically, I think that sleep, especially with the advent of polyphasic sleep as a possible long-term schedule, raises ethical questions, specifically when it comes to the *normative value of sleep*.

Is it morally good to sleep as much as one wants? Should we restrict our sleep if possible, striving for regularity and efficiency rather than indulgence; or does sleep, as an involuntary bodily function, merit indulgence whenever needed (like having to pee)? There's a popular view, more assumed than stated, that sleep should be indulged in whenever possible, for as long as the sleeper wants (within reason), and that it should, ideally, not be subsumed to efficiency or other concerns. But there's also a separate assumption, informed by asceticism perhaps⁷⁰, that to freely indulge in even "normal" physical demands is damaging, or at least likely to hinder higher development of the mind and spirit. Despite our tendency to trust some assumptions inherently, there isn't solid evidence either way, and you can see expressions of both these assumptions everywhere.

We know that being sleep-deprived for long periods of time is probably unhealthy (a fact that's often utilized by the sleep-indulgence camp), but that doesn't tell us about ways of restricting sleep that don't cause long-term sleep deprivation. Even so, people who "train" themselves to sleep less, or who sleep on odd schedules to maximize their efficiency, are usually viewed with a mixture of admiration and concern. What are we concerned about? Simply their health, or is there something more fundamentally "wrong" with not sleeping the usual amount, that we don't know how to express yet?

On the flipside, we also know that restricting food intake -- caloric restriction -- is healthy, and in fact appears to be the only⁷¹ sure-fire way of extending one's lifespan. Perhaps overindulgence in sleep is no more healthy than overindulgence in food.

It all comes down to how you view sleep, I think. Here are some views that I've espoused or considered in the course of pondering this topic:

⁶⁹ If you're interested in reading more about how different philosophers have batted this issue around, there's a paper I can recommend, which I enjoyed and thought gave a good overview of at least the classic Western philosophers. It's *The Philosophy of Sleep: The Views of Descartes, Locke and Leibnitz*, by James Hill, published in the Richmond Journal of Philosophy in Spring 2004. I will admit right now that I'm not well-read in theories of consciousness specifically, so I apologize if I've missed something obvious.

⁷⁰ Remember that not only Buddhism, but Christianity too, were informed by ascetic traditions.

⁷¹ For now, of course.

One possible view: Sleep is a mechanical recharge, like plugging a battered object into the wall for a few hours. There's something about sleep that either connects us to an energy source, or allows the mind/body to generate extra energy and store it for waking use.

The normative implications of Possibility One fall on the side of restriction, if restriction can be done in a healthy way. If you're recharging your batteries, doesn't it make sense to do it in the most efficient way you can? Would you turn down an upgrade to your electric car that made the batteries more efficient, able to charge faster? Living -- being awake and aware -- is pretty much an unqualified good, so to have more of it must be good, and if all that's in the way of that is mechanical efficiency, then restricted schedules which work are not only a good, but it becomes almost a moral imperative to adopt them if possible.

There are a few problems with this view: One, as we learn more, our bodies are seeming less and less like simple machines. To assume that we're built to run only 2/3 of our available time due to a simple power equation seems overly simplistic and increasingly unlikely. (Or maybe we're not; maybe we're designed to do just as well if we meditate to store energy instead of sleeping, and we don't know it yet.) Two, this view invites judgment of those who sleep any more than they must, and that smacks of a sort of Puritanical nastiness. Overindulgence isn't good for people -- I agree with that, in general -- but when it becomes morally necessary to restrict oneself beyond the natural tendencies, all kinds of mean and judgmental behavior towards others can result.

A second possible view: Sleep is an experience of the Void, wherein we lose consciousness while we commune with the Eternal and Infinite. Presumably our minds get in the way of communion⁷² with the Great Allness of things; it's been suggested that we're built to put our minds under for a while each day so that our [souls / subconsciousnesses / essences / pick something] can connect with the Source from which we and our whole world came from.

On this view, it's no longer morally desirable to restrict our sleep just because we can -- indeed, it becomes akin to skipping church to do so. (I'm not trying to promote the religious angle here; it merely makes for an easy way to communicate the powerful nature of the argument. One could just as easily say that to thwart such a connection would be to do damage to what we fundamentally are, cutting off a part of our lives that's as vital and necessary as the waking part.) Indeed, to weaken or restrict this connection could even be doing damage to us on a level we're not yet equipped to understand: Perhaps sleep is how we stay "in contact" with the place/state we came from, and not getting enough can hurt our chances of making it "back" after we die.⁷³

Of course, this view relies on a whole bunch of assumptions that, even if I wanted to take the time to try and prove them, I probably couldn't do. If you happen to believe them, then maybe you can choose to believe this...but even then, you won't have a *clear* answer as to what to do about sleep, either. Perhaps the sleep you get on a restricted schedule is enough. Perhaps no sleep is enough unless "done properly", and how to do it properly is anybody's guess. Maybe sleep has an even deeper purpose than that, which we simply haven't figured out yet! ...This is a pretty enough view, but it has a rabbit-hole in the middle, I think.

Then there's also a third option, which is to take the first view and give it a twist: Maybe sleep isn't really *necessary* at all. Maybe it's an evolutionary artifact that we can overcome, or will eventually "grow out of". This view is supported by stories like that of Thai Ngoc⁷⁴, the man who mysteriously lost the ability to sleep, and has lived for 33 years without it, and boasts a clean bill of mental and physical health.

72 To wit, Adam could not survive hearing the voice of God.

73 An unlikely truth, but a neat sci-fi plot, I think!

74 Among other places, you can read his story here: <http://www.thanhniennnews.com/features/?catid=10&newsid=12673>

If sleep wasn't necessary at all, would you still do it? How many people do you think would continue to, for how long? Do you think it would eventually be consigned to the category "Wastes of Time"? ...Or, to ask it another way, **beyond the fact that we need it, does sleep have any real value?**

Would you give up sleep? If I could never sleep again and never be tired, I would probably try it, but I can also see myself regretting such a decision, finding in the future that I couldn't tolerate "being here", in the world, 24/7. Maybe sleep exists to keep us sane, to give us a "time out" from what is otherwise a complicated and often emotionally brutal existence. Food has a "comfort" element that would prevent us from wanting to give it up entirely, and for most people, sleep does too ... the major difference is, restricting one's food intake, within reason, is generally accepted to be sensible and healthy.

This is a major problem: With most things, if there's no clear-cut answer one way or the other, it's best to side with Aristotle and aim for "moderation in all things". But what's "moderation" when it comes to sleep? Sleeping until you're only a little tired? That's courting long-term sleep deprivation, which is the one thing most people (scientists and polyphasers and moms alike) agree is the *least* desirable of the outcomes. With sleep, it seems that to either sleep until you're completely refreshed, or to restrict sleep to the least you can get and not be tired (which seems, for our purposes, to entail a nap-based schedule), are the only options that make any sense; and neither of them are moderate.

This little twist makes sleep one of the hardest items of personal care to build an ethical view of. We know we should bathe and be as clean as possible (within moderation); we know we should eat what we need to live and so that we're not hungry (within moderation); we know we should exercise and keep our bodies in good repair⁷⁵. But how should we sleep? A whole lot, so we're not tired, or very little, so we're efficient at spending our time (now that this can be done without being tired as well)?

Fortunately, it's beyond the scope of this section to pick an answer; and anyway, I believe that from where we stand, doing so would be arbitrary and premature. There are philosophical implications to polyphasic sleep, insofar as it's opened up the possibilities from "sleep a lot or be sleep-deprived" to include "sleep very little and don't be sleep deprived", and now we're all stuck pondering whether this is morally a better choice for those who can make it, and how much, if at all, those who don't sleep polyphasically ought to be trying to.

Thankfully, I enjoy pondering. If you do as well, your thoughts on this topic would be a welcome addition, so write them down! (If I can do it, you can do it.)

⁷⁵ Yes, again, within moderation -- Exercise taken to extremes is not healthy, and neither is medicine or performance-based tweaking.

VII. Conclusion

...And that's all of it, really. Some appendices (stuff I didn't know where else to put, basically), resources, and contact information follows, and you can always find more on my website, as well as a lot of embarrassing blow-by-blow of my mistakes and realizations in the archives. Also, if you purchased this book, keep your receipt, since there may be later "editions" and if you show your receipt, I'll give you an electronic copy of any of the editions later than the one you bought for free. (I don't believe in forced obsolescence, hmph.)

Speaking of further editions, if you know of any information that isn't contained in this book which should be, please contact me through my website at <http://www.puredoxyk.com> and let me know about it. Please? While the amount of information on polyphasic sleep is (at this moment) scarce, it's developing quickly. (Sleep itself is another matter. You can tell that I've tried to restrict this book to being about *polyphasic* sleep, rather than sleep in general, simply because I didn't want it to be 43,000 pages long.) You can also use the website to tell me about your personal website or blog that has to do with polyphasic sleep, and I'll list it on a page the website keeps for just such purposes. (Such things are a bit too ephemeral for a book, I think.)

As for my final comments on polyphasic sleep, well, obviously it's been a positive thing for me, overall. I won't say it hasn't been difficult -- tricky in places, and outright difficult in others -- nor will I say that the extra waking-time I have doesn't come at a price: Getting here was hard; and I definitely have to "watch my sleep schedule" like some people have to watch their diets, and I probably will for as long as I live polyphasically. It's a lifestyle change, no lie, and it's had a surprising range of effects on how I live. I've become more organized, more aware of my priorities, more attentive to my body, and more appreciative of what my time is worth. These experiences have also taught me a *lot* about sleep, some of which I'll always be glad to have learned: I know how to tune my mind and relax my body so I can fall asleep in minutes, and I can wake up refreshed less than half an hour later. (Some people claim that after a time, you just "learn to nap", like riding a bicycle. This has been my experience, but I can't claim that it's universal.) I know what environments I can and can't sleep in. The difference between good, refreshing sleep and bad sleep is like day and night to me now (I'm embarrassed to say that before polyphase, I *thought* I knew the difference, but I didn't). I know how to recognize when I'm tired, and how tired I am, and when being tired is affecting me physically or mentally. Again, I thought I knew these things before, but it turns out I didn't. The mind and body are amazingly complex and subtle things, and I'm glad to know more about how they work together than I might have, had I not undertaken these experiments.

I wouldn't have written this whole thing if I didn't see a benefit to others in polyphasic sleep schedules. Not to everyone, of course, but to a significant minority at least. I used to think that maybe this idea would change the world -- maybe it would be the beginning of a 24-hour society, of more flexibility for working people with families, or of a global appreciation of how important getting good sleep and using our time well is. But that all may never happen, of course. Maybe all we get out of polyphasic sleep in the long run is that some people gain a new respect for time and our mind/bodies, and a boatload of extra time to pursue their hobbies in for a while.

I think that would be fine by me.

Thanks very much for reading!

~"PureDoxyk"

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VIII. APPENDICES

Appendix I: Sleep DRUGS

One can hardly write anything this size on sleep without mentioning drugs. Personally, my take on pharmaceuticals has always been "Not unless I bloody have to" -- I read a lot of science fiction, and I'm fundamentally uncomfortable with a huge industry that draws insane profits off of people's illness and, when that's not enough, turns to producing drugs for people who *aren't* ill and profits (also excessively) off that. That's not to say "drugs'r bad, m'kay" or that I haven't or wouldn't like others to benefit from medical science, but I do think our society turns to drugs way too often and without proper consideration for the long-term consequences, motivated, as we are, by an endless marketing blitz that often reminds me of something out of a Philip K. Dick novel. All of which is my opinion, of course, but it never hurts to know the bias of your author.

With that in mind, I've never taken a sleeping pill in my life⁷⁶ -- I never had to. I try everything else before I resort to drugs, as a general rule, and it was in the midst of "trying everything else" to fix my sleep problems in college that I stumbled upon polyphasic sleep; and for me, that did the trick. (And it's a good thing, too, because it's unlikely that sleep drugs would have been a good idea, or an efficacious one, for dealing with what I was facing back then.) I think that makes me uniquely *un*qualified to discuss the various stimulants and depressants that are prescribed to "fix" sleep disorders or improve the quality of sleep or wakefulness for people who simply don't sleep well for one reason or another. I do know that this class of drugs can often be addictive and/or dangerous if taken improperly, in excess, or in combination with other substances, so if it's a route you or someone you know is pursuing, then please, hit the books hard and be vigilant.

However, there is one sleep drug that I have read up on pretty well, and which is interesting for being in a different class entirely from the rest of the stimulant/depressant drugs, and that's **modafinil**. Modafinil is marketed by the drug company Cephalon in the U.S. and UK as Provigil⁷⁷, and in other places as, generally speaking, Moda-something or Something-vigil. It's been around since 1998, and it doesn't appear that there will be generics until at least 2012. Modafinil's intended use is as a treatment for narcolepsy, though it's prescribed off-label for ADHD, depression, "shift-worker syndrome", sleep apnea, vague complaints of daytime sleepiness, to help with the symptoms of MS, Parkinson's, chemotherapy...and quite a bit else. The "point" of Modafinil, as I gather, is to make sleeping about 6 hours as restful as sleeping about 8 hours. So basically it claims to be Everyman 4.5 in a pill. ;)

I have no personal experience with Modafinil, but I have talked to some people who have, and I've read an excellent piece that Slate.com published⁷⁸, wherein an author takes the drug for a test-drive and reports some interesting and lucidly-considered results. He seems to experience minimal physical side-effects but a powerful and immediate psychological addiction. And I wouldn't be at all surprised to know that addiction results from a drug that allows its taker to feel like they're "cheating sleep". Obviously, if Modafinil (and probably similar drugs as well) can be addictive, then the long-term effects should be better known before they're made widely available. The last thing we need is millions of people hooked on something that later turns out to be deadly (*coughcigarettescough*).

I'll say one more thing on the topic: Sleep is part of a balance. You expend energy; you must rest to recover it. The polyphasic schedules in this book do not let you "cheat" sleep -- they let you trade some

⁷⁶ Except for melatonin; I have used that a handful of times. And I give my daughter chamomile tea occasionally, if she has trouble sleeping.

⁷⁷ I agree with the people who've called this name "Orwellian" and "creepy".

⁷⁸ Which you can read here: <http://www.slate.com/id/2079113/>

of the total duration for frequency, at a cost of some effort and planning. The result is that, overall, you sleep less, and you pay for it by sticking to your naps (which isn't such a bad price, according to some of us). *Drugs don't let you cheat either* -- there really is no way to cheat; a balance is a balance. Drugs let you trade some sleep-time, sleepiness, or difficulty sleeping, for certain effects on your body, long and short-term. This trade might be worth it in some cases...but it would be pretty ill-advised to make the deal without knowing exactly what you're trading for, unless you're in a desperate situation. I can see using sleep drugs occasionally as being possibly worth it; with something like Modafinil, you can be fairly certain that the short-term effects won't be too bad. But I wouldn't use it, or any other sleep drug that I know of, with any regularity or for a long period of time, unless I had some condition that it was worth possibly-serious, unknown long-term effects to deal with.

Appendix II: ARGUMENTS TO BOSSES

Convincing a job to accommodate your polyphasic schedule can be tricky -- how tricky depends largely on your job and who you report to, secondarily on how much has to change in order for you to be accommodated, and thirdly on how well you present your case. Here are some basic, but hopefully helpful, tips for pulling off the last one:

- Know exactly what you need, and be prepared to state it in simple, clear terms. "I'd like an extra half hour for lunch, which I'd be happy to make up by coming in half an hour early. I would spend the extra time in my car, sleeping. I have a timer so I know I'll wake up on time," or, "I'd like permission to close my door from two to two-thirty, turn off my phone, and take a nap."
- Make it sound serious, unless your boss is the type to appreciate quirkiness in hir employees (hint: most aren't). The most successful approach here seems to be to explain that you have a terrible time sleeping normally, it's affecting your work, and you'd like to try a possible solution you read about.
 - Don't explain all about polyphasic sleep, unless your boss seems interested. It just sounds weird to some people. Instead, simply say that part of the solution involves taking a nap at X time.
- Offer to do something to compensate for any off-the-clock time your schedule will cause. But if you work for a smaller business and are paid hourly, also offer to *not* make up the time, since saving half an hour a day's worth of your pay may help motivate your boss.
- Be prepared to answer questions about where you'll keep your blankets, how you'll keep people from waking you up, etc. Bosses are often anxious to know that your napping won't be disruptive, and showing that you've thought it all out helps.
 - However, don't spout off a bunch of details without being asked, either. State your case, make your request, and then wait for a reply. (This is an old ~~Jedi mind~~ sales trick -- It's harder for someone to say "no" when they're engaged in the conversation, as opposed to listening to a lecture.) Answer the questions you're asked, and ask some of your own if you can, to keep the conversation two-sided.
- If you can, have your blanket/timer/pillow/etc. handy, so that if your boss asks about them you can show them to him/her and explain where you'll be keeping them. (I wouldn't suggest walking into the boss' office carrying them though: It could look like you're calling them dismally boring!) For some reason the thought of a blanket in a place of work can give bosses the heebies -- seeing a small, neatly folded one and hearing that it'll be in your bottom drawer or in your car can allay that response.
- If you have trouble, consider seeking out a sympathetic doctor. This works best if you actually have a sleep disorder, but some doctors will write you a note saying they approve of your attempting a nap-schedule if you tell them you're having trouble sleeping and would rather try polyphasic sleep before you resort to drugs. (Which may even be true, like it was in my case.)
 - Also, sometimes just telling your boss that you're trying to avoid taking drugs to help you sleep is helpful. Nobody likes drugged-up employees; they tend to miss work.

- If you're really serious and your immediate boss won't hear of it, consider gently bringing it to the attention of the next-higher-up. Avoid saying anything at all negative about your supervisor unless you feel it's worth making your work-day miserable over; but sometimes an explanation and telling a bigger boss that you think your request is reasonable, and that it would mean a lot to your feeling positive about your job, can help. Bigger bosses often work in words and numbers more than in people, and an easy way to keep your "job satisfaction" high might appeal to them.
 - Don't go crazy and ask everybody up the chain of command, though, unless you want to risk being seen as a nuisance.
- Lastly, if it seems they won't budge, shelve the issue and bring it up again later, at a time that's favorable to you (during a review in which you did well, for instance). If you're a good worker and gently insistent about wanting time for your nap(s), they might just decide to indulge you because it's a cheap way for them to keep you happy.

Appendix III: GRADUAL ADAPTATION

Every once in a while, someone brings up the idea of "adapting gradually" as a way to possibly avoid the ickier parts of adjusting to a polyphasic schedule. Part of the inspiration for this idea comes from Claude Stampi and his single-subject Uberman experiment; in that experiment, the subject adjusted to the schedule over the course of several days, rather than dropping right into it like I did, and like most people who successfully adapt do.

There's no diary of experiences from Dr. Stampi's subject that I know of, but from the test results it appears that the subject certainly underwent at least moderate sleep deprivation. And of the people I know who attempted to adapt gradually, all of them experienced sleep dep as well. Changing your sleep schedule just does that, I think. I can't vouch for whether that sleep deprivation is any "lighter" than the normal amount polyphasers go through, but I do know that, almost necessarily, it would have had to last longer. (Transitioning to Uberman normally, the really icky sleep dep is over with by day 5 or 6, assuming no oversleeping; but if you were transitioning gradually, you probably wouldn't even be on a full Uberman schedule by then.)

The question of whether a longer period of moderate sleep dep is better or worse than a short period of holy-cow-wonkiness will remain in discussion for a long time, I predict. But there definitely is one downside to adapting gradually: It leaves more room for mistakes. If you choose to attempt this route, plan carefully!

Appendix IV: REFUTATIONS

Have there been any refutations -- formal arguments against -- polyphasic sleep? Actually, yes, there have. The most comprehensive one I know about was written in 2005 by a Dr. Piotr Wozniak; you can read the entire (huge) paper online, here: <http://www.supermemo.com/articles/polyphasic.htm>. Dr. Wozniak covers most of the common arguments against polyphasic sleep in his paper, as well as some, er, "unique" ones, like the "fact" that no women do it. (Hmph, I'll assume he's not directly commenting on my femininity.)

You can read my refutation of Dr. Wozniak's paper on my website, here: <http://www.puredoxyk.com/index.php/2006/11/01/an-attack-on-polyphasic-sleep/>. I pulled out the bad facts (there are several) and pointed out some of the unsupported assumptions (many), and took issue most strongly with the fact that Dr. Wozniak considers all the blogs about failed polyphasic attempts as crushing ironclad evidence that no polyphasic attempt can work, but then stridently, openly ignores any of the same type of evidence that claims that polyphasic sleep *can* work.

Dr. Wozniak is pretty well-read in sleep issues, and he is an advocate for another alternative sleep pattern, which he calls "free-running sleep". (It's basically exactly what it sounds like.) And while I don't doubt that sleeping whenever you're tired would be nice, I've also dubbed FRS the only less practical sleep schedule than Uberman that I've ever heard of. I simply can't imagine a situation in which someone with any responsibilities whatsoever could pull that off.

However, I should mention that Dr. Wozniak himself is a very respected weirdo, and a lot of what he's written, I found to be both creative and well-informed; and where not, at least really interesting. I certainly wouldn't attempt to discredit him or his body of work as a whole. It's just unfortunate that he seems to have had an agenda, and a lot of bad information, when it came to writing about polyphasic sleep.

Appendix V: Resources

Here's a collection of some of the resources that I found useful for researching, adapting to, and continuing my education about polyphasic sleep⁷⁹.

ARTICLES & BLOGS

The Google "polyphasic" Group at <http://groups.google.com/group/Polyphasic> is a great place to start; their archives are a phenomenal resource. Do be aware that, as is often the case on the Internet, sometimes people in the group who really don't know squat go spouting off their opinions, so if you read something extraordinary, check with the group (& especially the moderators) before deciding to believe it.

The Polyphasic Wiki is an excellent general information source:
<http://polyphasicsleep.info>

Steve Pavlina's Polyphasic Sleep articles are one of the best blow-by-blow descriptions of an Uberman adaptation out there: <http://www.stevpavlina.com/blog/2005/10/polyphasic-sleep/>

The **Wikipedia Article on Polyphasic Sleep** was pulled, but sometimes resurfaces...I have nothing to do with it: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyphasic_sleep

My First Writeup – **the Uberman's Sleep Schedule Node @ Everything2.com**:
http://www.everything2.com/index.pl?node_id=892542

Sleeping Schedules is a collection of articles on different schedules:
<http://www.sleepingschedules.com/>

A Personal Account of Uberman sleep by Randy Haines, has some good and some iffy information:
<http://www.oddology.net/insomnia.html>

BBC Article about using Polyphasic Sleep in Solo Sailing:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/1180274.stm>

Large Informational Site written by a Polyphaser, this one has lots of good info:
<http://www.eqkaspian.com/naps/index.shtml>

⁷⁹ Note: This is not a bibliography for this book; I used in-line citations rather than a bibliography here. This is simply a collection of generally useful resources.

Men's Journal Article on Power Napping, gives a good idea what kind of "public" info is out there:
http://www.mensjournal.com/healthFitness/0601/napping_power.html

RESEARCH & STUDY

The Stanford Online Archives on Buckminster Fuller

<http://collections.stanford.edu/bucky/>

Original Time Magazine Article on Buckminster Fuller

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,774680,00.html>

Wikipedia Entry on the Claudio Stampi book, "Why We Nap"

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Why_We_Nap:_Evolution,_Chronobiology,_and_Functions_of_Polyphasic_and_Ultrashort_Sleep

Journal of Clinical Investigation study on Sleep and Growth Hormone (warning: hurts to read)

<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=436797>

The Supermemo (Dr. Wozniak) Article Attempting to Disprove Polyphasic Sleep

<http://www.supermemo.com/articles/polyphasic.htm>

(My rebuttal: www.puredoxyk.com/index.php/2006/11/01/an-attack-on-polyphasic-sleep/)

Transcript of Video Spot on "Nap Salons" and why naps benefit working adults

<http://www.healthology.com/sleep-disorders/sleep-disorders-news/video4247.htm>

Article on ProVigil (modafinil)

<http://www.healthology.com/sleep-disorders/sleep-disorders-news/article1258.htm>

Slate.com Reporter's Personal Experiment with ProVigil (modafinil)

<http://www.slate.com/id/2079113/>

Extensive (very enthusiastic) New Scientist article on Modafinil

<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg18925391.300>

TOOLS & USEFULNESS

Typing Master online typing test / speed clocker

<http://www.typingmaster.com.au/java/ttapplet.htm>

Online "Simon" Game (for testing memory & reflexes)

<http://www.thepcmanwebsite.com/media/simon/>

Alzheimer Association's Comprehensive Tests (speed of thinking)

http://cognitivelabs.com/alz_assoc_refertestpage2.htm

Placebo's Blog – home of the Sleep Track mp3s and software to track naps

<http://www.placebo.serv.co.za/>

About The Author

The author is a wife and mother, a student, a professional, a philosopher, and a wannabe writer. She lives in Michigan in the USA, with family and a cat and a small community of musical instruments.

The author's hobbies are singing, writing poems and stories, reading poems and stories, watching kung fu movies, geeking out at a Shaolin temple, and making stuff out of little fiddly bits.

The author freely admits that "Pure Doxyk" is not a really great Internet handle, but it's been around a long time; you know how they stick. Also, the author tends to use any of about ten other Internet handles at will, because you all need to be kept on your toes.

;)

XI. "Cheat Sheets": Things to cut out & use for reference

Following are some Quick Reference pages and parts of pages, for you to cut or tear out, fold up or hang up, and generally use to kick-start your brain on some key aspects of the polyphasic transition. Just so you know, I didn't use anything of this sort when *I* adapted -- all I had was a friend, a timer and my Big Fat List of things to do with the extra time. But there were many requests for "Cheat Sheet"-like objects, and if they help some people out, wonderful. As with the rest of this book, if you have suggestions for improvement, send 'em along via my website. I've also tried to leave lots of room on these to write your own notes, additions, etc. Happy Napping!



Why I WANT TO be Polyphasic:

Here or on another sheet, write down all the reasons why you want to be polyphasic. State your case loud and clear, and then keep this with you to remind yourself why you aren't going to give up!

Reasons to be Polyphasic: _____

What is Polyphase?

Here's a "cheat sheet" for those of you who want an easy way to describe to others what you're doing. Someone suggested memorizing a version of this; someone else advocated making copies of this to hand out to curious bystanders -- it's up to you, of course.

Polyphasic Sleep is an alternative sleep schedule that aims to be more efficient than "monophasic", or "all-at-once-at-night" sleep. In a polyphasic sleep schedule, several naps are taken throughout the day instead of one big "nap" at night. Done properly, this can reduce the overall sleep needed per 24 hours from eight to four, or even two, hours total. Many people have successfully used polyphasic sleep this way, sometimes for long periods of time, and it appears to have no ill effects. It can, however, be difficult to get used to. Polyphasic sleep also requires a very strict schedule for the most part -- naps have to happen on time, and if a "polyphaser" misses a nap, it can be as tiring as missing a whole night's sleep. There is very little scientific research that's been done on polyphasic sleep schedules, but the community of polyphasers is always looking for opportunities to encourage some!

When You First Wake Up

The time immediately after waking is a crucial one, because if you're tired, it can be very easy to talk yourself into going back to sleep "for just a few minutes". Adapted polyphasers would do well to avoid this habit, as it reduces the efficiency of the schedule and can lead to tiredness (or even ruin an established schedule); and for new polyphasers, it's *critical* that this behavior be avoided, or adaptation will not occur. Here's a cheat sheet with some ideas for getting past that "sleep inertia". You can carry this list, hang it up, etc., but I've always liked the idea of laying it over your face while you sleep! ;)

Upon Waking:	JUMP UP!	*	LEAVE the room immediately	*	SING!
	TURN ON some music, TV, or other noise	*	CALL someone	*	DANCE
Do some EXERCISING	*	Make some FOOD	*	Change CLOTHES	*
SHOWER	*	WALK somewhere	*	Or follow your own ROUTINE:	
<hr/>					
<hr/>					

Before you Go To Sleep

Of course, many good wake-up plans begin with taking certain actions before you go to sleep. Many of these were discussed elsewhere in this book, but here's a quick-reference list (and space to write your own ideas) of things that can be helpful to do right before you take a nap that you suspect you'll have difficulty waking up from:

Before Sleeping:	Start making some FOOD to eat when you get up	*	rotate ALARMS
start an interesting PROJECT	*	watch the first bit of a MOVIE	* do a PEP TALK
make the room a little COLD	*	make PLANS with someone, in real life or online	
set something that needs to STAY FROZEN out on the counter	*	Or follow your own ROUTINE:	
<hr/>			
<hr/>			

When you Get Tired

Ay, here's the rub: When you get really tired, it's hard to make decisions, especially good ones. The body tends to take the route of least resistance, which almost always means making an excuse why you should go ahead and go to sleep for a while. But the body is a *liar* when it's tired; that "few minutes" or "just closing your eyes" will turn into hours before you know it, and all the hard work you've put into adapting to a polyphasic schedule so far will be for naught. The only real way to succeed in adopting a new habit

as fundamental as a sleep schedule is to *give no quarter*.⁸⁰ Don't be fooled into thinking that it's okay to just rest for a second, to just lay your head down, to just sit in bed and read...like a sleazy first date, the brain/body will pull all kinds of stunts to get you into a compromising position. Of course, the best defense is still a good offense: If your Big Fat List of Things To Do⁸¹ is nice and beefy, if you can manage to have something else going on almost all the time, you'll be relatively immune from the really tricky nudges to sleep -- to say it another way, **the human mind is a formidable adversary, but thankfully it's easily distracted**. On the other hand, even the Biggest, Fattest List can't possibly cover every second. You'll eventually hit a moment when your head is buzzing from tiredness and you realize that you're *out of* [suitable] *things to do* -- what now?

The answer, of course, is another list: An Emergency Backup Big Fat List, if you will. For me, this was a section at the top of my usual Big Fat List, which I highlighted and told myself, "No matter how tired I get, I'm not allowed to even *contemplate* resting until I've done *all these* things." That's one approach. Another approach is to go through the items one at a time or pick one, but beware thinking too hard about it, since the brain's default answer will almost certainly be "Yeah, none of that looks good...let's go to sleep". This Backup list is more of an Emergency list than a usual one; it assumes that you're tired, and that you've done or run out of all the other ideas, and that you're down to taking desperate measures. Thus, there are some things here that are different from the other lists in this book.

You'll notice that some things which are present on most other lists are not present here -- things like exercise. That's because this list assumes that you're already tired, and so it's avoiding items that might make you more tired.⁸² Keep this in mind as you add to or modify it for your own needs.

There's also some rather weird items on here: there's "Talk to yourself", and "Do the Shuffle". What I mean by the former is, simply, hold a running dialog. It doesn't matter about what; just keep talking. Silence encourages sleep, whereas talking tells your brain that there's activity going on. "The Shuffle" is an idea that was given to me by a woman I had the good fortune to talk with for a while, who did the Uberman schedule for over a year (at least; she stopped hanging out online while she was still doing it). Due to her work, she *had* to drive *during her Uberman adaptation* -- yeah, the mere idea gives me the shudders. But she figured out how to stave off the sleepies: By systematically tightening the muscles in her body, on rotation. Toes, feet, legs, butt, stomach, shoulders, arms, neck, fingers...and so forth. I'm *amazed* at how well this works as a short-short term, immediate solution, and I successfully used it myself when I had to drive during my adaptation and felt myself starting to fuzz out. Thanks, Heidi!

Then there's, um, "that thing grownups do". By which I mean autoerotic stimulation or pornography, however you like it. (I didn't put it that way on the list, because, well, someone else might see your list!) Giggle-fits aside, look, the sleep portion of the brain is powerful, so it makes sense to battle it with other powerful parts of the brain, right? And we all know that the brain *leaps* to attention whenever there's sex involved. Only one caveat: I *strongly* suggest that, before beginning any such activity, you have something *else* to do afterwards in mind. Because you're all the more likely to feel like sleep is a good idea then. Still, "I'm going to organize my socks" is not nearly as compelling a personal mandate as "I'm going to thoroughly enjoy myself for ten minutes and *then* organize my socks." Also, keep in mind whether orgasm typically makes you tired or gives you energy -- it's different for different people.

As you've probably noticed, there are several versions of "lists of things to do when you get tired" in this book. In my opinion, you can't have too many ideas at hand for this situation; feel free to mix them up as you need to.

80 That's right, my next project is a book of Polyphasic Battle Cries. ;)

81 See Page 26

82 Exercising might be fine, as long as you don't have long to go before your next nap. But you wouldn't want to finish a round of push-ups and then realize that you're now tired *and* physically exhausted, and you've still got an hour to go!

An Emergency Backup BFL: Walk in CIRCLES * Talk to YOURSELF

Do the SHUFFLE * SING or RECITE poetry * Do THAT THING grownups do

Chew or suck on ICE * Do something MYSTERIOUS (like drawing Tarot cards, for instance)

* Tend to PLANTS * DUST every corner of a room * Add your own ideas:

HABITS AND SUCCESSES

It can be hard for many people to keep track of what they've tried and what's been successful, especially when tweaking a schedule or troubleshooting a problem nap. This last Cheat Sheet is just a place for you to write things that you've tried and how often they worked, so that you can have a place to look and see that, for instance, sleeping on the couch isn't working for you, but eating lunch early is helping. In my experience at least, five or six times usually tells when a fix is likely to work, though don't forget that it will take a month to truly get used to any changes you make. You may also try different things to fix one certain issue, in which case just leave the extraneous "Issue" lines blank, or use them for notes.

Issue: _____

Change made: _____

Effect of 1st try: pos / neut / neg **2nd try:** pos / neut / neg **3rd:** pos / neut / neg
4th: pos / neut / neg **5th:** pos / neut / neg **6th:** pos / neut / neg

Issue: _____

Change made: _____

Effect of 1st try: pos / neut / neg **2nd try:** pos / neut / neg **3rd:** pos / neut / neg
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Issue: _____

Change made: _____

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Issue: _____

Change made: _____

Effect of 1st try: pos / neut / neg **2nd try:** pos / neut / neg **3rd:** pos / neut / neg
4th: pos / neut / neg **5th:** pos / neut / neg **6th:** pos / neut / neg

x. changelog

This is Version One of the Ubersleep book; there have been no major changes so far. Or I should say, there have been a whole rabid slew of changes, but they're all considered part of the process of writing and so, thankfully, I don't have to enumerate them yet. ;)

-END-