

Sleep in America® Poll 2020

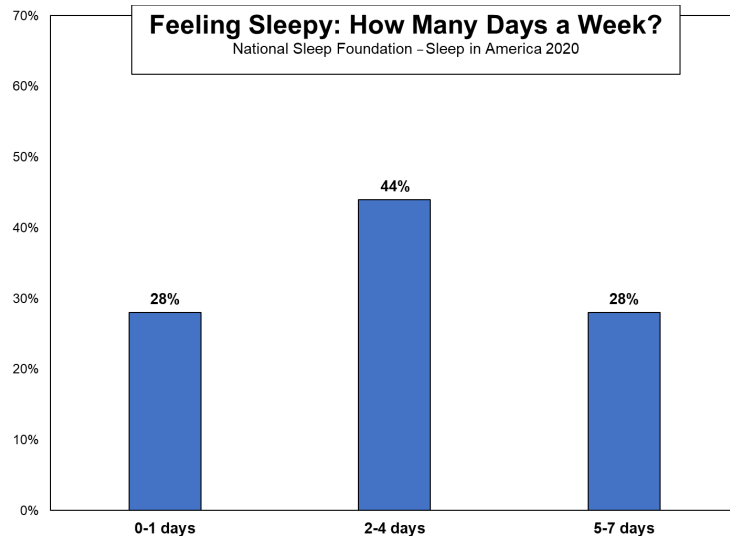
Americans Feel Sleepy 3 Days a Week, With Impacts on Activities, Mood & Acuity

Time for a nap?

If the idea sounds good, you're not alone. The National Sleep Foundation's 2020 Sleep in America poll finds that Americans feel sleepy on an average of three days a week, with many saying it impacts their daily activities, mood, mental acuity, productivity and more.

Just 16 percent say they don't feel sleepy at all in a typical week (this excludes sleepiness at bedtime and when waking up). About half, by contrast, feel sleepy anywhere from three to seven days a week. That includes a big gender gap: Women report feeling sleepy 3.4 days a week, on average; men, 2.7 days.

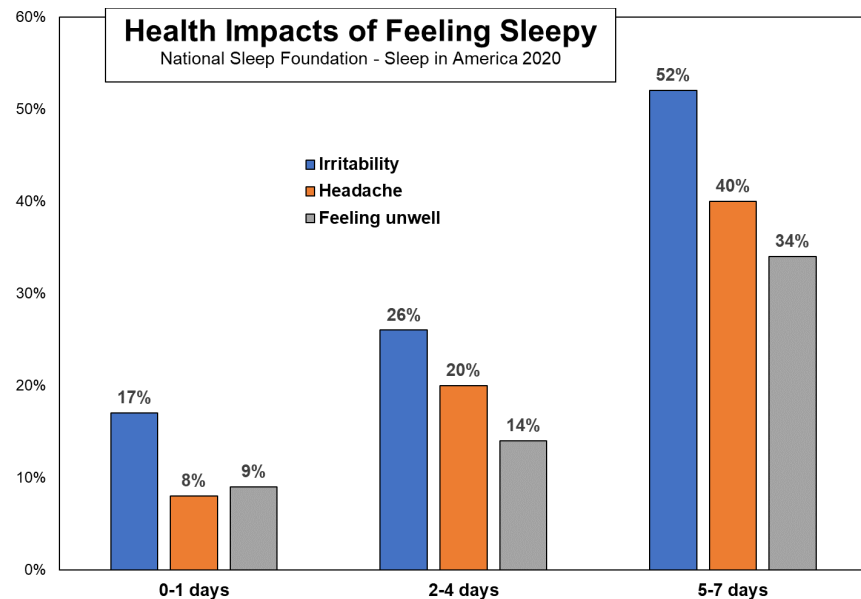
Effects are widespread. Forty percent of adults say feeling sleepy at least occasionally interferes with their daily activities, including nearly a quarter who say this happens often or sometimes. Forty-four percent of women report at least occasional effects, as do 36 percent of men.



In the most commonly reported effect, 58 percent say feeling sleepy can impact their mood. Similarly, 55 percent say sleepiness at least occasionally makes them irritable, and three in 10 say this happens with some frequency (that is, often or sometimes).

Other health effects are headaches, at least an occasional result of sleepiness for 36 percent of adults; and feeling generally unwell, at least occasional for 33 percent.

Impacts rise with frequency of sleepiness. Among the approximately three in 10 Americans who have feelings of sleepiness on five to seven days a week, 52 percent report often or sometimes experiencing irritability when sleepy; 40 percent, headaches; and 34 percent, feeling unwell apart from headaches. Each is far higher than among those with fewer experiences of sleepiness.



Not surprisingly, 52 percent overall say that feeling sleepy can impact their willingness to go out in the evening. Other items are of seemingly greater import: Nearly half say feeling sleepy can impact their ability to focus their thoughts (48 percent), get exercise (47 percent) or get things done (46 percent). Fewer, but still substantial numbers, say it can impact their work performance (33 percent) or relationships with friends and family (26 percent).

Again, these are most prevalent among those who feel sleepy most often. For example, among those who feel sleepy on no days or one day a week, 25 percent say it may impact their ability to focus their thoughts. That jumps to 69 percent of those who feel sleepy on five or more days.

Other impacts of feeling sleepy			
	0-1 days	2-4 days	5-7 days
Mood	34%	64%	74%
Going out in the evening	34	53	70
Focus your thoughts	25	49	69
Get exercise	25	50	64
Get things done	26	46	65
Work performance	18	33	47
Relationships	12	25	41

When they feel sleepy, more Americans say it's generally because they're not sleeping well enough (55 percent) as opposed to not having enough time to sleep (44 percent). Younger adults are more apt than their elders to lack the time for sleep rather than to blame their sleep quality.

Results by employment status are similar: Half of employed adults say that when they're sleepy, it's because they don't have enough time to sleep. This falls sharply among retirees, to 31 percent. They're more apt to cite problems with their sleep quality.

Seniors report fewer effects of sleepiness. On average, adults younger than 50 report 3.6 of seven impacts; those age 50-64 report 3.0; and those 65 and older report 1.9. Illustratively, 69 percent of 18- to 49-year-olds say that feeling sleepy can impact their mood; this declines to 56 percent of those age 50-64, then drops steeply to 36 percent of those age 65 and older.

One reason is that older people report less stress in their personal lives, and stress relates to sleep health overall, prevalence of sleepiness and effects of sleepiness alike.

Sleepiness and sleep health

Sleepiness is associated with overall sleep health. The National Sleep Foundation’s Sleep Health Index – based on measures of sleep quality, sleep duration and disordered sleep – worsens among people who report having more sleepy days, more interference with their daily activities due to sleepiness and more of the sleepiness effects listed above. For example, among those who typically feel sleepy on one day or no days in a week, the SHI, on a 0-100 scale, is a robust 85. Among those who feel sleepy on five to seven days, by contrast, the index drops to 64.

The effect is even more dramatic in the SHI’s subindex based on sleep quality: It’s 80 in the least sleepy group, plummeting to 46 among those who feel sleepy on five to seven days per week. This makes sense; among other items, sleep quality includes feeling well-rested, dozing unintentionally and whether insufficient sleep impacts your daily life.

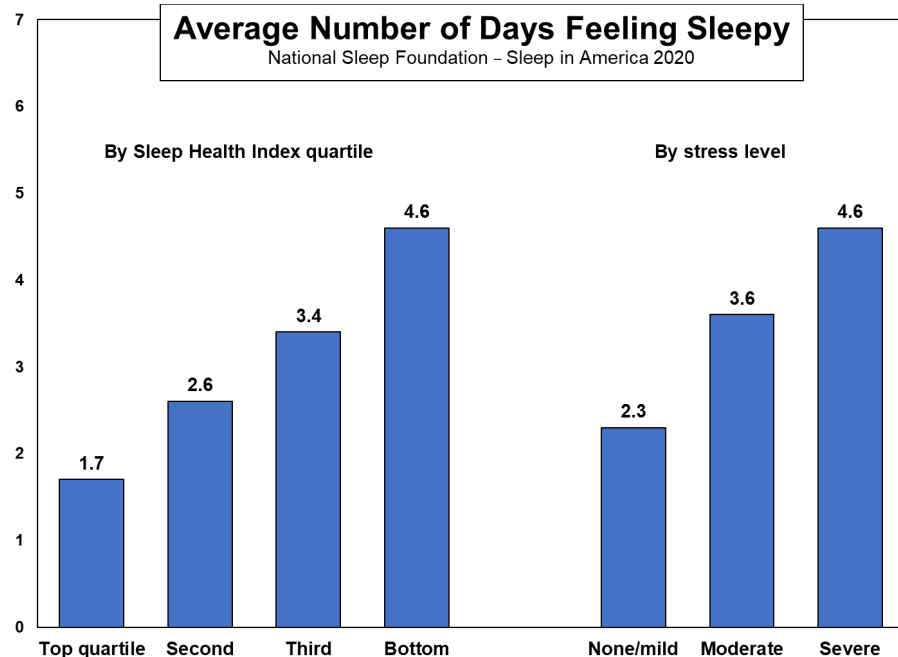
Shown another way, people in the top quartile for overall sleep health report feelings of sleepiness on an average of 1.7 days in a week. Among those in the lowest SHI quartile, this jumps to an average of 4.6 days.

There’s also a relationship with self-reported sleep problems. People who say they do not have a sleep problem (57 percent of all adults) feel sleepy on an average of 2.4 days a week; among those who “maybe” have a problem (24 percent) it’s 3.6 days; and it’s 4.4 days among those who say they do have a sleep problem (19 percent).

	Overall SHI	Sleep Quality subindex
Days feeling sleepy		
0-1	85	80
2-4	77	65
5-7	64	46
Sleepiness interferes with daily activities		
Rarely/never	81	72
Occasionally	71	54
Sometimes/often	66	50
Number of impacts due to sleepiness		
0-1	82	75
2-4	76	63
5-7	69	52

As noted, stress, a strong correlate of sleep health overall, also relates to sleepiness and its impacts. People with no personal stress or only mild stress report feeling sleepy on an average of 2.3 days a week. That rises to 3.6 days among those with moderate stress and 4.6 days among people with severe stress.

On average, people with little or no stress report 2.1 out of seven sleepiness impacts tested in this survey; that rises to 3.9 among people with moderate stress and 4.6 among those with severe stress. Thirty-nine percent of those with less stress say that sleepiness can impact their mood, for example; that jumps to 75 percent of those with moderate stress and 87 percent with severe stress.



Stress, as mentioned, declines with age. Fifty-seven percent of those under 50 say they have moderate or severe personal stress. That eases to 47 percent of 50 to 64-year-olds and drops to 32 percent of seniors. Similarly, 53 percent of employed people report moderate or severe stress, declining to 34 percent of retirees.

In terms of coping mechanisms, Americans are most apt by far to try simply to “shake off” sleepiness – 62 percent say this is often or sometimes their approach. A third to three in 10 report getting fresh air, coffee, a nap or a caffeinated beverage that’s not coffee. Fewer, about two in 10, have a sugary snack, and 11 percent chew gum. Last on the list are taking prescription or nonprescription stimulants; 3 percent report using either of these when feeling sleepy.

There are some notable differences by frequency of sleepiness. Having a sugary snack and taking a nap both are about twice as prevalent among people who most often experience sleepiness, compared with those who are sleepy least often. People with the highest levels of sleepiness also are most apt to take the leading approach to coping – “shake it off and keep going.”

Dealing with sleepiness	
Shake it off	62%
Fresh air	35
Coffee	33
Nap	31
Soda/caffeinated drink	30
Sugary snack	22
Gum	11
Rx stimulant	3
OTC stimulant	3

METHODOLOGY – This survey for the National Sleep Foundation was conducted among a random national sample of 1,011 adults, Dec. 13-20, 2019. Results have a margin of sampling error of 3.4 points for the full sample. Error margins are larger for subgroups.

The survey was produced by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling and data collection by Ipsos Public Affairs via its online KnowledgePanel®, which provides internet access to randomly recruited participants.

Full results follow. * = <0.5%

1-14 previously released.

15. Other than at bedtime or when you wake up, how many days during a typical week do you have some feelings of being sleepy?

	0 days	1-2 days	3-4 days	5-6 days	7 days	No opin.	Mean	SD
12/20/19	16	32	24	11	16	0	3.1	2.3

16. How often, if at all, does sleepiness interfere with your daily activities?

	----- More often -----				---- Less often ----			
	NET	Often	Sometimes	Occasionally	NET	Rarely	Never	Skipped
12/20/19	23	6	17	17	60	39	21	*

17. When you feel sleepy, does it ever impact any of these, or not?

12/20/19 - Summary Table

	Yes, impacts	No, doesn't	Skipped
a. Your ability to get things done	46	54	*
b. Your ability to focus your thoughts	48	52	*
c. Your work performance	33	67	*
d. Your mood	58	42	*
e. Your relationships with friends and family	26	74	*
f. Your willingness to go out in the evening	52	47	*
g. Your ability to get exercise	47	53	*

18. How often, if at all, do these things happen when you're feeling sleepy?

12/20/19 - Summary Table

	--- More often ---				---- Less often ----			
	NET	Oft.	Smtims	Occ.	NET	Rarely	Never	Skip
a. You develop a headache	22	7	15	14	64	31	33	*
b. Apart from a headache, you feel physically unwell	18	6	12	15	66	37	29	1
c. You become irritable	31	10	21	24	45	29	16	*

19. When you feel sleepy, what's the bigger reason - is it because you're not getting time to sleep or because you're not sleeping well enough?

	Not getting enough time to sleep	Not sleeping well enough	Skipped
12/20/19	44	55	1

20. Do you think you have a sleep problem, or not?

	Yes	No	Maybe	Skipped
12/20/19	19	57	24	0

21. Other than at bedtime or when you wake up, how often, if at all, do you do these things when you're feeling sleepy?

12/20/19 - Summary Table

	--- More often ----				--- Less often --			Skip
	NET	Oft.	Smtims	Occ.	NET	Rarly	Nvr	
a. Have a cup of coffee	33	20	13	14	52	13	39	1
b. Have a soda, tea or another caffeinated drink that's not coffee	30	15	15	17	52	22	30	1
c. Take a nap	31	12	20	23	45	30	15	1
d. Take a prescription stimulant	3	2	1	2	94	4	89	1
e. Take an over-the-counter stimulant	3	2	1	2	93	8	85	1
f. Shake it off and keep going	62	40	21	19	18	9	9	1
g. Get some fresh air	35	10	25	26	38	20	18	1
h. Eat something sugary	22	8	13	20	58	28	30	1
i. Chew gum	11	5	6	8	80	17	63	1

22. Thinking about the last seven days, how would you describe your personal stress?

	--- None/mild ---				----- Severe -----			
	NET	None	Mild	Moderate	NET	Severe	Very	Skipped
12/20/19	51	14	38	36	13	10	3	*
7/18/17	53	24	29	34	13	9	4	*

END