

# Confidential • Counseling • Solutions

BEST CARE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

## EAP Notes

### Early Riser or Night Owl: *Understanding your Mental Clock*

Whether you tend to work late or wake early, learning to pay attention to your own mental clock can help you make better use of your time.

While you're awake the day is comprised of four key periods: low concentration, creativity, problem solving, and rejuvenation.

**Low Concentration.** During these periods, characterized by mental lulls, the body's biological clock shifts from one stage of focused activity to another.

**Creativity.** Before the brain is flooded with the day's stimuli, this morning interval serves as an ideal window for brainstorming and open-ended thinking.

**Problem Solving.** When the brain is warmed up, alert and highly active, concentration is at its peak for activities ranging from analysis to memorization.

**Rejuvenation.** To stay sharp, experts suggest refreshing the mind with daily exercise and brain-building activities like reading, artistic exploration and puzzle solving.

**Morning Person:** Early risers' creativity generally peaks early in the wake cycle, before distractions can impede the brain's imagination focus. By late afternoon concentration tends to lag. Individual preferences vary widely, but research shows that high achievers often follow this pattern:

5:30am	Wake, bad time to concentrate
6:00am-8:00am	Good time for creativity
8:00am-12:30pm	Good time for problem solving
12:30pm-2:30pm	Bad time to concentrate
2:30pm-5:00pm	Good time for problem solving
5:00pm-8:00pm	Rejuvenation
8:00pm-10:00pm	Bad time to concentrate
10:00pm	Sleep

#### CRITICAL TIME

**1:30 pm**

*Schedule routine tasks rather than crucial work to avoid errors when your mind settles into its afternoon lull.*

**Night Owl:** Those who enjoy staying up late are most productive long after they've shaken off morning grogginess. For those who can afford to sleep in, working late can be effective.

8:00am	Wake, bad time to concentrate
8:00am-10:00am	Bad time to concentrate
10:00am-12:00n	Good time for creativity
12:00n-1:00pm	Good time for creativity & problem solving
1:00pm-3:00pm	Bad time to concentrate
3:00pm-6:00pm	Rejuvenation
6:00pm-11:00pm	Good time for problem solving
11:00pm-12:00am	Bad time to concentrate
12:00am	Sleep

#### CRITICAL TIME

**Midnight**

*Avoid late-night snacks and alcohol, since digestion prevents quality rest.*

Source: Caplan, Jeremy, *Time Magazine*, January 16, 2006, pgs. 78-79.

*If you need help making the most of every day, contact your Best Care EAP. A professional counselor is available to help. For a confidential appointment please call, 402-354-8000 or 800-666-8606.*

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