

Stretching after a nap feels so good !

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In only a few seconds, it reinvigorates you, relaxes you and so much more !

This reflex is a very instinctive reaction found in mammals. Stretching after a nap helps to "cleanse" the body, but has nothing to do with the stretching practiced by an athlete. "It is first of all an intense contraction of all the muscles of the body, says Dr. Lionel Coudron¹, head of the Institut de Yogathérapie in Paris. More powerful than the anterior muscles (at the front of the body), the posterior muscles (at the back of the body) lead to an extension of the body backwards. So the front muscles, while contracting, will stretch and lengthen. After this self-extension, a deep reflex relaxation occurs. »

A super invigorating step!

During a nap (or in the morning when you wake up), the muscles are numb, cooled, and even retracted. Muscle contraction helps to fight the effect of weightlessness. It also helps to raise body temperature and improve blood circulation. A quick way to get the whole body moving again!

Then relaxation overcomes...

During the relaxation of the muscles, the body produces endorphins, the hormones of well-being. Stretching followed by yawning (combined with a long breath) also frees the diaphragm, which soothes the body and mind. "Both parts of the vegetative nervous system are activated. We turn the "motor" back on by stimulating the sympathetic system and we improve our ability to disengage by stimulating the parasympathetic," summarizes Lionel Coudron.

How to stretch?

Lie down or stand up, interlace your fingers and carry your arms above your head. Inhale by pushing your hands together and pulling back a little. Hold your breath for a few seconds and then release. Open your mouth wide to make you yawn (it is part of the stretching!). Yawning also increases tear secretion to prevent daylight from damaging the eyes.

¹ Author of *La yoga-thérapie*, ed. Odile Jacob. www.idyt.com