

Do you know how elephants sleep?

Elephants can sleep on their four legs or lying down. When they sleep standing they often lean on a tree or rest their trunk on a branch, although they can also sleep without this.

Elephants can also snore and sigh during sleep

Captivity vs. Wild

Sleep time also varies depending on whether the elephant is free or captive.

Captivity: Captive elephants usually sleep between 4 and 6 hours, this is mainly because they have all their basic needs covered.

Wild: In several studies on elephants in the wild it has been proven that they can barely sleep two hours a day and in case there is danger or they are not comfortable there may be periods in which they spend several days without sleep. They may have small naps, but do not have deep sleep reaching the REM phase. In order for herd members to get some sleep, one of them will be appointed to stay awake and keep watch.

This difference is due to the need to find food and the dangers that lurk.

Elephants are diurnal animals, meaning they are active during the day time and inactive or have periods of rest during the night time. Like us they take advantage of the darkness of the night to sleep. However, in the areas closest to towns or villages they can reverse their sleep habits to take advantage of the hours in which there is less human activity. During the day it is more common for brief naps to lean on a tree or similar.

Influence of age on sleep

Calf

Calf elephants sleep mainly at night, but also have small naps during the day. They don't wake up from any noise, they only interrupt their sleep to drink breast milk.

Mature

Normally, elephants sleep on their four legs, but there are times when they can be seen lying on the ground. For this they must feel comfortable and safe.

Old

Old elephants sleep during the night time as well as during the day time, all while remaining standing. When they are very old they usually avoid lying on the floor, since they may not be able to get up again.

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