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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT TRUCKERS



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The 2 p.m. Slump is Real

Managing that afternoon dip starts with recognizing it.

Lunch is behind you. The cab is warm. The highway has settled into a rhythm. Nothing feels particularly wrong — but staying sharp suddenly takes a little more effort.

Welcome to the 2 p.m. slump.

That afternoon dip is not just boredom or a bad attitude. The human body follows a circadian rhythm — an internal clock that helps regulate when we feel alert and when we feel sleepy. For many people, alertness naturally drops during the early to midafternoon.

For an over-the-road driver, several other factors can pile on at the same time.

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Fuel price, access, parking, food all belong in the calculation.



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You'll be surprised at these factoids + Sudoku

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AFTERNOON FATIGUE

The 2 P.M. Slump Is Real

Circadian rhythm, heat, heavy meals, and monotony can converge in the afternoon. Smart habits help drivers stay sharp.

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 HYDRATE Sip water regularly.	 EAT LIGHT Choose lighter meals and snacks.	 KEEP COOL Use airflow to stay comfortable.	 STAY ENGAGED Plan stops. Move. Keep your mind in the drive.
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Staying Sharp After Lunch

Managing that afternoon dip starts with recognizing it before your attention starts to drift.

There is a stretch of the workday most drivers know without needing a clock.

Lunch is behind you. The cab is warm. The highway has settled into a rhythm. Mile markers click past. Traffic may be light. Nothing feels particularly wrong — but staying sharp suddenly takes a little more effort.

Welcome to the 2 p.m. slump.

That afternoon dip is not just boredom or a bad attitude. The human body follows a circadian rhythm — an internal clock that helps regulate when we feel alert and when we feel sleepy. For many people, alertness naturally drops during the early to midafternoon.

For an over-the-road driver, several other factors can pile on at the same time.

August heat can drain energy. A large or heavy lunch can leave you feeling sluggish. Long stretches of straight highway provide little mental stimulation. Add several hours already spent behind the wheel, and the result can be a driver who is technically awake but not nearly as sharp as he or she was that morning.

Fatigue does not always announce itself with a yawn. It can show up as missing an exit,

realizing you do not remember the last few miles, drifting within the lane, checking mirrors less often or reacting a fraction slower than normal.

Those are signals, not inconveniences.

The first defense is knowing your own pattern. If you regularly hit a wall between 1 and 3 p.m., plan around it when possible. A short break before the slump gets bad can be more useful than trying to push through until you are fighting to keep your eyes open.

Food matters, too. A giant meal may be satisfying, but it can make an already sleepy part of the day feel heavier. Smaller portions and lighter choices can help keep energy steadier. So can staying hydrated, especially when summer heat is working against you.

Then there is monotony.

Cruise control, open interstate and steady traffic can make the miles feel easy. That is exactly when attention can wander. Change your mental rhythm. Scan farther ahead. Check mirrors deliberately. Sit up. Adjust the cab temperature. Stop and walk for a few minutes when you need to reset.

And if you are truly sleepy, none of those tricks replaces rest.

Coffee can help temporarily. Fresh air may perk you up. Music may make the cab feel livelier. But none of them can substitute for sleep once fatigue has taken over.

Professional driving is built on managing risk before it becomes an emergency. The afternoon slump is one of those risks because it can feel ordinary right up until it is not.

At 2 p.m., the road may look exactly the same.

Your level of alertness may not be.





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FINISH THE RUN

Don't Let the Last 50 Miles Beat You.

Complacency can creep in when the destination feels close. Stay disciplined until the truck is parked.

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Independent Truckers



KEEP SCANNING
Stay aware of what's ahead.

OBEY THE ROUTE
Follow your plan. No shortcuts.

STAY OFF THE PHONE
One call can wait. Your life can't.

FINISH STRONG
A strong finish defines the run.

Finish the Run

**When the destination is finally close,
it is easy to mentally clock out early.**

Five hundred miles to go gets your attention.

Fifty miles to go can fool you.

The delivery is close. The familiar exit is coming. Maybe you can already picture the dock, the parking spot, the shower or the meal waiting once the day is done. After hours behind the wheel, your brain begins moving ahead of the truck.

That is when the last 50 miles can become dangerous.

Complacency is not the same thing as carelessness. Most experienced drivers are not suddenly deciding that safety no longer matters. It is usually subtler than that. The hard part of the run feels finished, so the mind relaxes before the truck actually stops.

But the road does not care how close you are.

There are still lane changes to make, construction zones to negotiate, traffic signals to read, and four-wheelers making unpredictable decisions. The final miles may also bring you off the interstate and onto narrower roads, through busy towns, into industrial parks or onto unfamiliar property.

In other words, the driving may actually become more demanding just as your concentration starts easing off.

Fatigue compounds the problem. If those final miles come near the end of a long driving day, reaction time and judgment may not be as crisp as they were that morning. Add the natural urge to “just get there,” and drivers can begin to accept smaller gaps, delay a needed stop, or rush maneuvers they would have handled more patiently earlier.

The fix starts with treating the finish as part of the trip – not the reward after it.

When you get within that final hour, mentally reset. Check your mirrors. Look at the route into the customer. Confirm the correct entrance. Know whether you will be dealing with tight turns, restricted roads, a security gate or a congested truck entrance.

If you need a break, take it. Being 35 miles from the destination does not make fatigue less real. Ten minutes out of the seat can be worth far more than ten minutes saved on the clock.

The same principle applies once you reach the property.

Some of the most demanding work of the day may happen at 5 mph. Parking lots, docks and yards are full of fixed objects, pedestrians, forklifts and other trucks. That is no place for a driver whose brain has already checked into the hotel.

Finish the backing job. Set the brakes. Secure the truck. Then the run is over.

There is pride in making good time, keeping appointments and delivering freight when promised. But professionalism is also measured by how you finish.

The first 500 miles count. ... So do the last 50.

*WHERE
is Gizmo?*

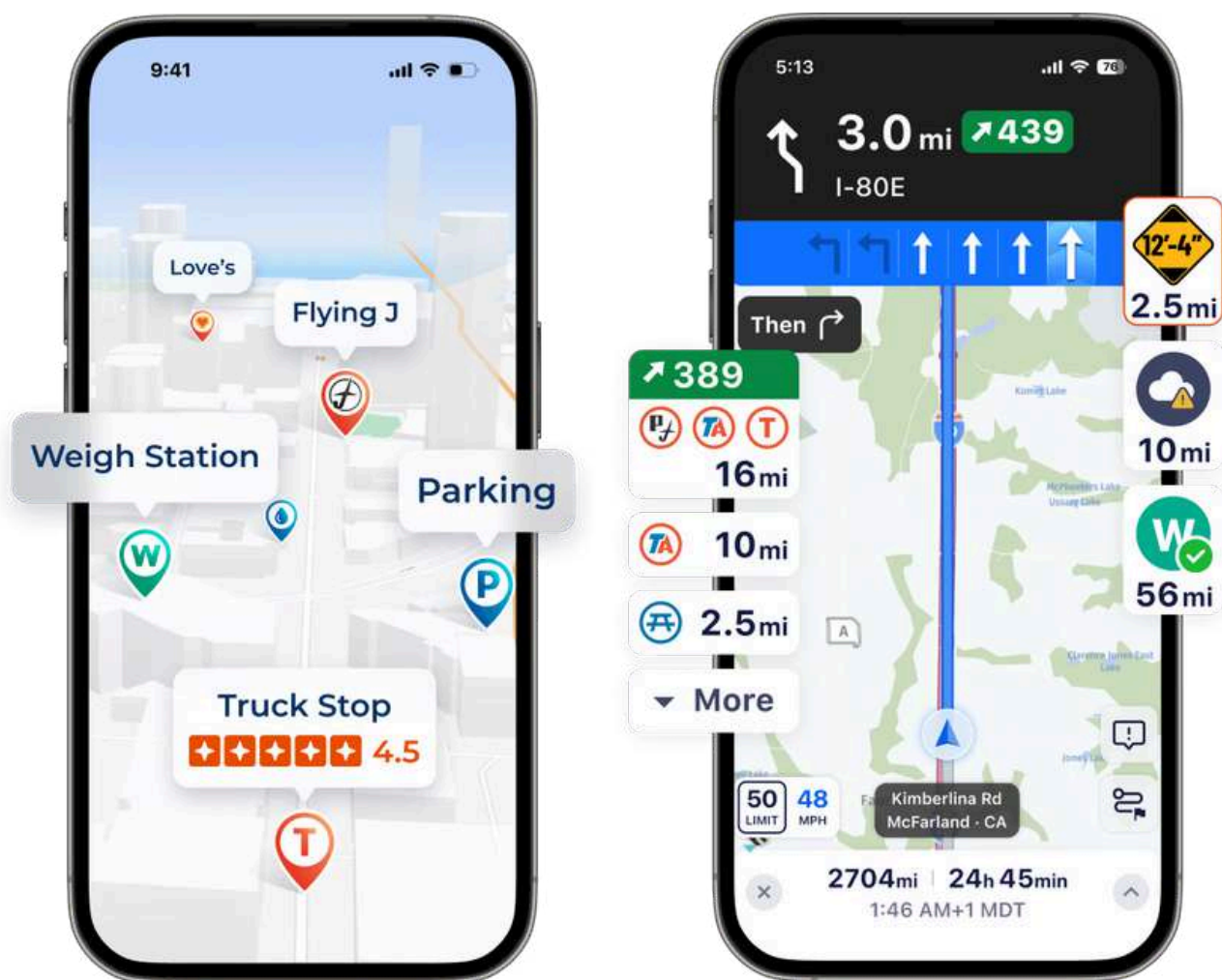


This summer, keep your eyes peeled for Gizmo, NAIT's furry mascot. He'll be out on the road, wagging his way across the miles. Spot him? Don't paws – snap a pic, send it our way!

mona.brimeyer@naitusa.com

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SMART STOPS

What Makes a Good Fuel Stop?

Go beyond fuel price: safe entry and exit, parking layout, food, showers, congestion, lighting, and driver know-how.

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ENTRY & EXIT Easy in, easy out. Room to move.	PARKING Adequate, well-designed spaces.	FOOD Good options for real fuel.	SHOWERS Clean, available when you need them.	LIGHTING Well-lit lots and walkways.	LOW CONGESTION Less waiting, more time rolling.

More Than the Pump Price

Access, parking, food, showers, lighting, and lost time all belong in the calculation.

The sign beside the interstate may advertise diesel down to the tenth of a cent.

That number matters. It just is not the whole story.

For an independent trucker watching every operating expense, fuel price deserves attention. A few cents per gallon multiplied across hundreds of gallons and thousands of miles adds up quickly. But veteran drivers also understand something that does not fit neatly on the big roadside sign:

A cheap fuel stop can get expensive in a hurry.

Start with access. Can you get a tractor-trailer into the property without fighting a tight turn across traffic? Is the entrance clearly marked? Is there enough room between the pumps and parking area to maneuver? More importantly, can you get back onto the highway without losing 20 minutes waiting for a gap?

A good truck stop works with the truck, not against it.

Then there is the fuel island itself. Drivers notice whether pumps are laid out logically, whether traffic flows cleanly and whether there is enough space to pull forward without

blocking everyone behind them. A crowded, poorly designed fuel island can turn a routine stop into an exercise in frustration.

Parking may be even more important.

A stop with plenty of well-marked spaces has value, especially late in the day. So does good lighting. Drivers shutting down for the night want to see where they are walking and what is happening around their equipment. A parking lot full of potholes, blind corners and improvised spaces tells its own story.

Inside matters, too.

Food does not have to be fancy, but clean, decent options count. So do reliable showers and restrooms. A driver who has been out for several days will judge a stop differently from somebody pulling in for a soft drink.

And then there is time.

Saving four cents per gallon is less impressive if reaching the station requires a long detour, the pumps are backed up and the checkout line stretches halfway across the store. Independent drivers know time is part of the cost of doing business.

That is why experienced truckers often develop their own mental map of dependable stops.

They remember which places have an easy entrance. Which ones usually have parking. Which showers are clean. Which lots feel safe after dark. Which counter moves quickly at 6 a.m. And which location is almost never worth the trouble, regardless of what the fuel sign says.

Technology can help drivers compare prices and amenities before they arrive. But experience still matters.

The best fuel stop is not necessarily the cheapest one.

It is the stop that lets you fuel, take care of yourself, handle what the truck needs and get back on the road without turning a simple break into another problem to solve.





Truckers Healthcare is becoming **LongHaul Direct**

For years, NAIT members and independent truckers have turned to Truckers Healthcare for help reviewing insurance options and connecting with licensed agents. The road ahead begins with a name that better reflects what we do and the people we serve.



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	6	9				7		
		2				3	1	9
7			3	9		8		
6		4		8				
5					9		2	1
1								8
2					8		7	6
		6	1				8	
	7	8			3			5

Sudoku

The goal is to fill a 9x9 grid with digits 1 through 9, ensuring each digit appears only once in each row, column, and 3x3 subgrid.

9 Random Facts About Colorado

Colorado became the 38th state on Aug. 1, 1876, earning its nickname, "The Centennial State," because it joined the Union 100 years after the Declaration of Independence.

- Colorado has the highest average elevation of any U.S. state – about 6,800 feet above sea level.
- Denver is nicknamed the Mile High City because its official elevation is approximately 5,280 feet – exactly one mile above sea level.
- Colorado's lowest point, along the Arikaree River near the Kansas border, is still about 3,315 feet above sea level – higher than the highest points in many states.
- Pikes Peak inspired "America the Beautiful." Katharine Lee Bates wrote the poem that became the song after visiting the summit in 1893.
- Colorado is home to four national parks: Rocky Mountain, Mesa Verde, Great Sand Dunes, and Black Canyon of the Gunnison.
- Colorado is the only U.S. state whose entire land area lies above 1,000 meters – about 3,281 feet – in elevation.
- The Continental Divide runs through Colorado. Water falling on one side ultimately flows toward the Pacific, while water on the other side drains toward the Atlantic basin.
- The cheeseburger has a Colorado connection. Denver restaurateur Louis Ballast received a trademark for the name "cheeseburger" in 1935.
- Colorado voters approved women's suffrage in 1893, making it the first state to enfranchise women by popular vote – 27 years before the 19th Amendment established women's suffrage nationwide.