

Failed Experiment: 48 Hour Alternating Polyphasic Sleep Cycle

by Fireger

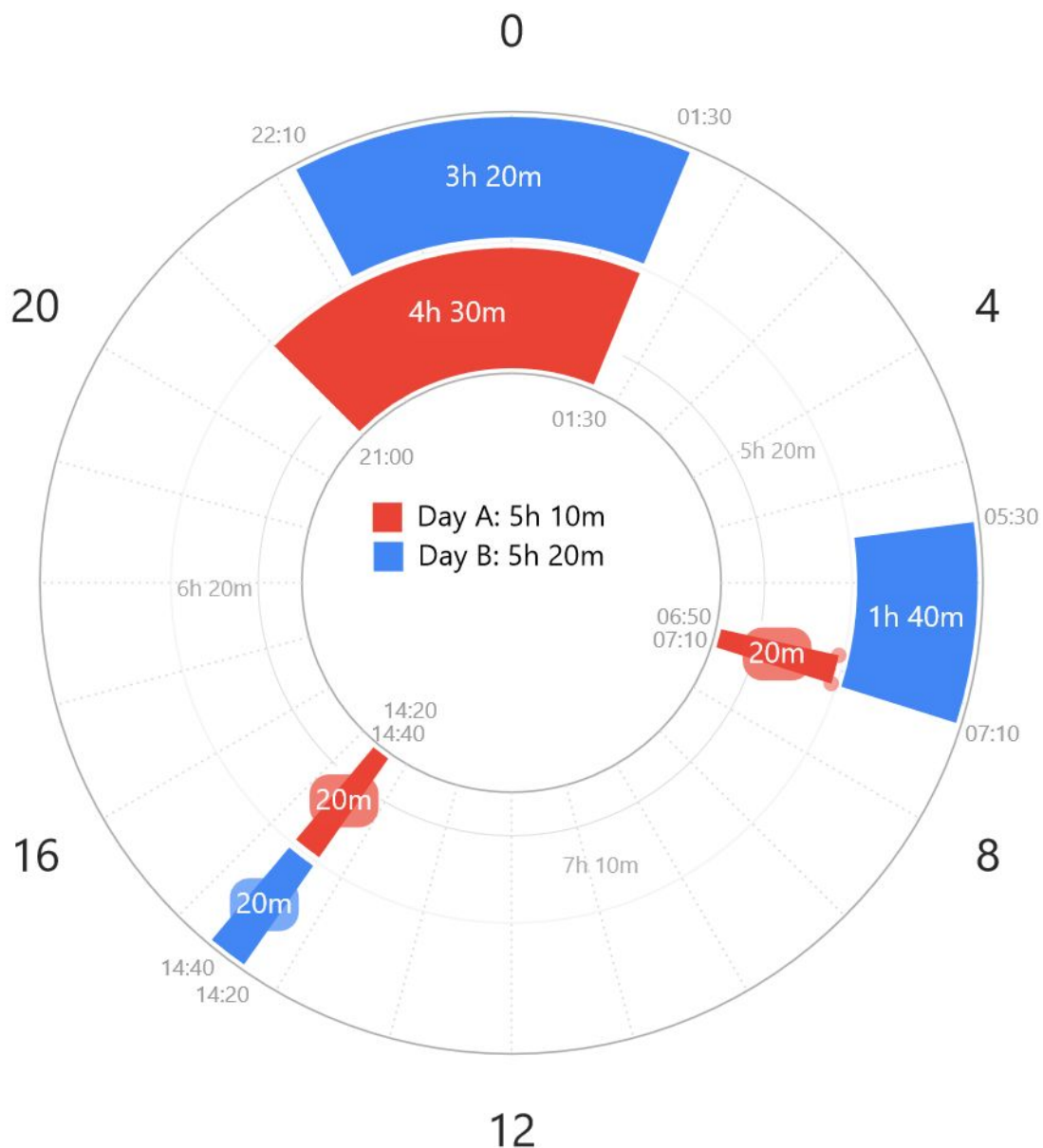
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Introduction:

The idea of the experiment was to attempt a polyphasic sleep schedule based on a 48hr cycle independent of the circadian rhythm, as opposed to the usual 24hr cycle.

The experiment alternated one day of an Everyman 2 (E2) schedule with one day of a Dual-Core 1 (DC1) schedule. I.e. Day A was E2, and Day B was DC1.

My circadian rhythm was also properly managed, by wearing red laser goggles during the ideal “dark period”, turning down the temperature in the room, and fasting. My dark period was from 1900 to 0400 both days.



Report:

Initially, it felt like any other polyphasic sleep schedule. It was a little difficult to get up when the alarms went off, but overall not too bad.

I started having issues after roughly a week into adaptation. I seriously was struggling to stay awake during periods of times that I would be asleep on the alternate day's schedule.

For instance:

On Day A, I would be extremely tired from ~0530 until I went to sleep. I think this is because on Day B I would be asleep during this time.

The constant switching caused me to have microsleeps in my chair in front of my computer, constantly, while also suffering from a lot of the symptoms of extreme sleep deprivation: fatigue, forgetfulness, 'fuzzy' head, and more.

I also suffered from periodic inability to focus my vision, which other polyphasic sleepers also report during sleep deprivation in adaptation. I wouldn't be able to focus on anything for about 3 seconds, and then my eyes would 'strain' back into focus. This happened probably every 5-10 minutes depending on how much I was suffering from fatigue.

I also seemed to get deja vu at the end of my sleep. I would dream that my alarms were going off, that I got up to turn them off, and that I already started my day -- and then some seconds later the alarms would go off in reality.

Losing track of time was another issue that I experienced. I completely lost all sense of time/day. i.e. It felt like it would be time to have dinner, whereas it would really be only 12pm. I think this is because my circadian 'day' begun at 0400, instead of ~0700 when I would usually wake up.

Since I stopped the schedule after just 9 days, I did not suffer from any REM or SWS crashes. I quit then because the fatigue had already become too much for me.

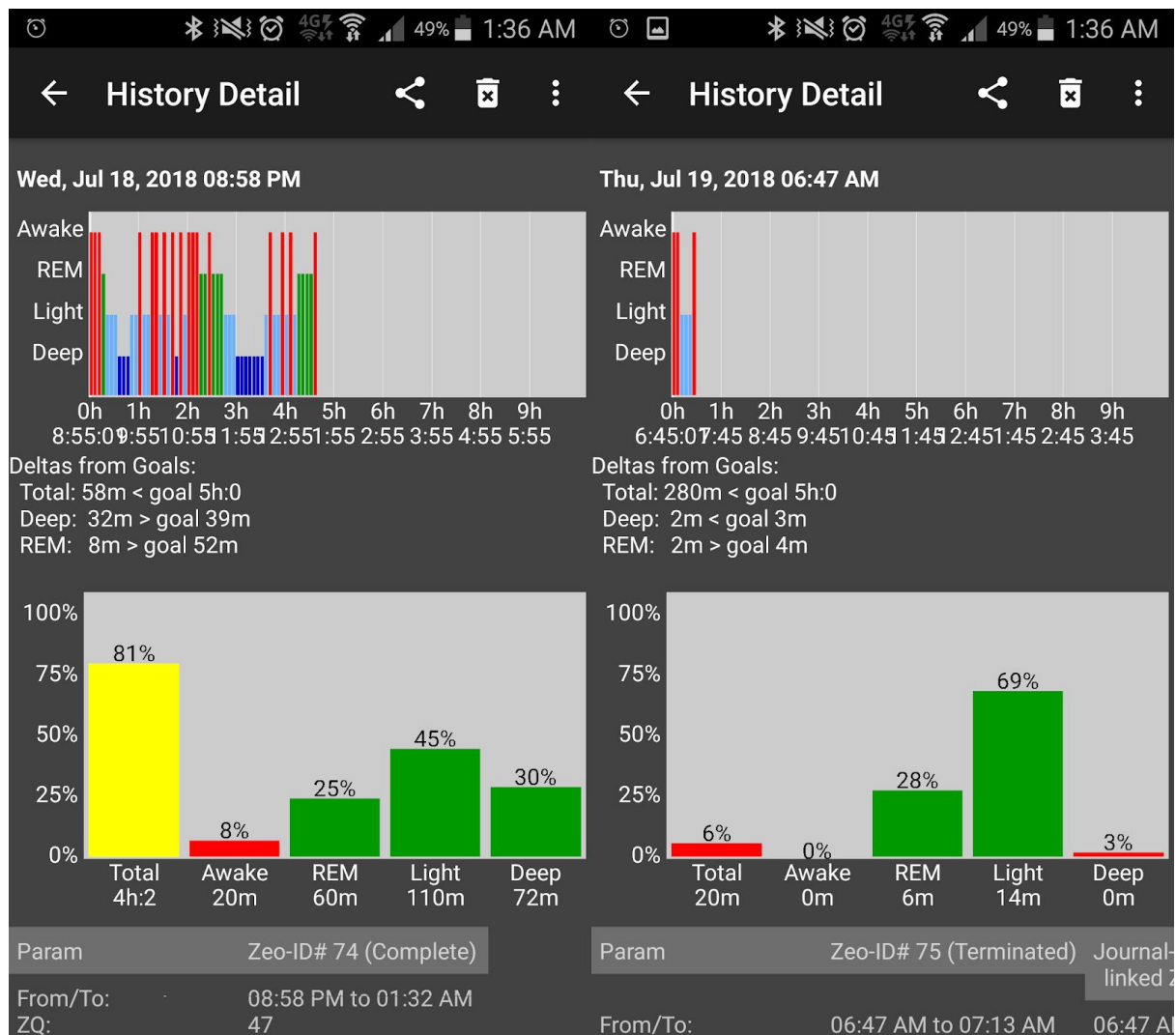
Discussion:

I would not recommend this schedule to anyone. I don't believe that this schedule is adaptable at all.

I would like to see other attempts at a similar schedule, however, to see if it is possible to successfully adapt under different parameters and circumstances. I plan on attempting an alternating schedule again in the future, under different circumstances as I believe stress from university and everyday life may have contributed to the extreme fatigue that I suffered.

Logs and daily analysis:

Day 1



Zeo didn't save the recording of the afternoon nap, it doesn't seem to record naps if the bulk of it is recorded awake.

I had actually video recorded myself going to sleep, as a lot of my mono contained similar wake patterns. Everytime I roll over Zeo would record it as a wake. This is a false positive, as those nights I would fidget a lot in my sleep.

This is a pretty standard beginning to a polyphasic adaptation, although my naps are probably slightly more efficient than a beginners, as I'm used to relatively 'efficient' napping due to past attempts at adapting to other polyphasic schedules.

Day 2



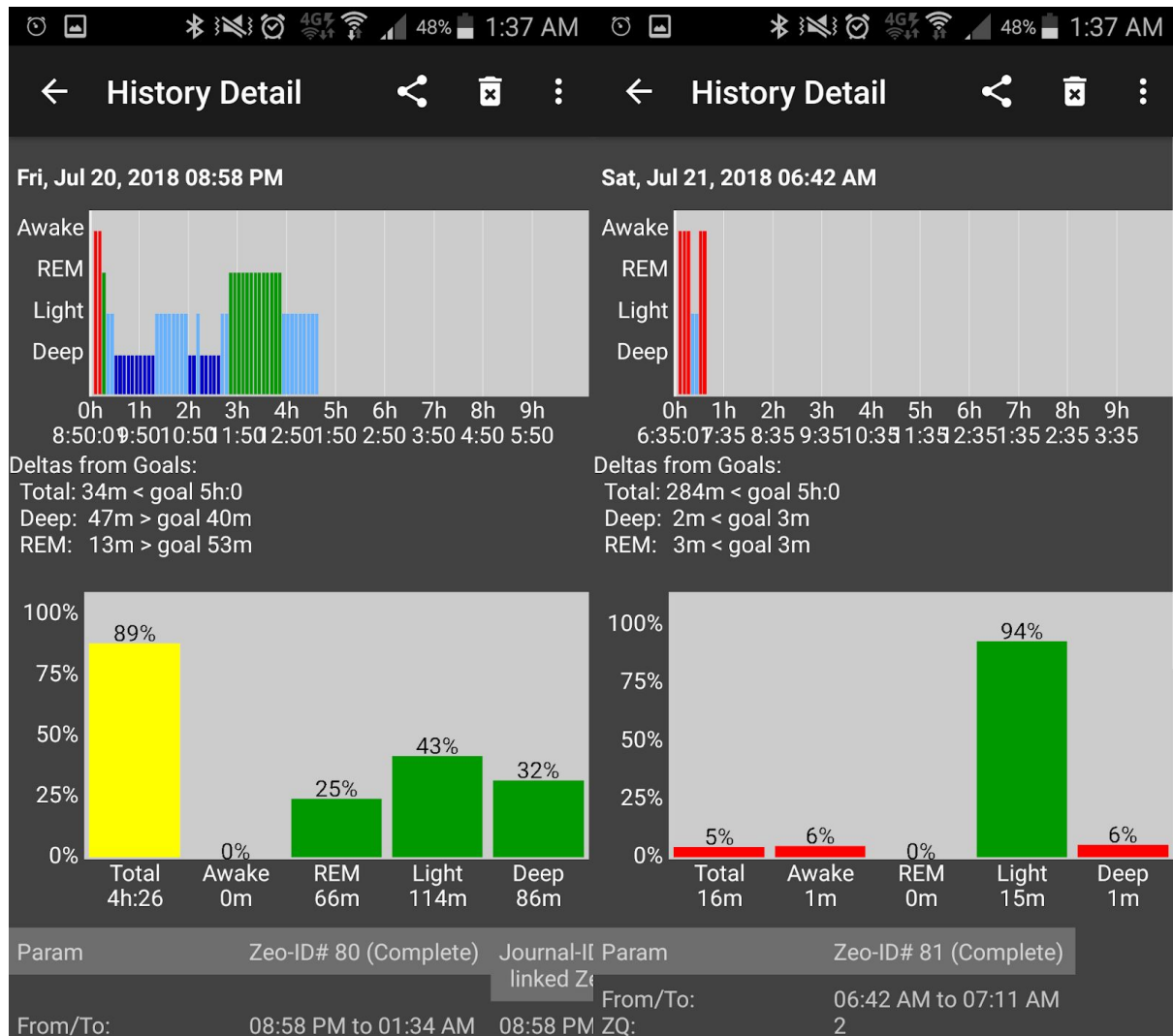
Same issue with the afternoon nap again. Although I was definitely asleep during the naps, Zeo must of recorded a bulk of it as awake.

Now I also think Zeo had a slight issue while recording that first core. Almost 3 hrs straight of pure SWS doesn't seem believable. Although it had definitely felt like an SWS wake as I suffered from extremely heavy sleep inertia that lasted a solid 20 minutes or so.

Those wakes during the second core are false positives, I was moving a lot during my sleep than as well.

The nap wasn't anything special, but it did feel like a REM wake.

Day 3



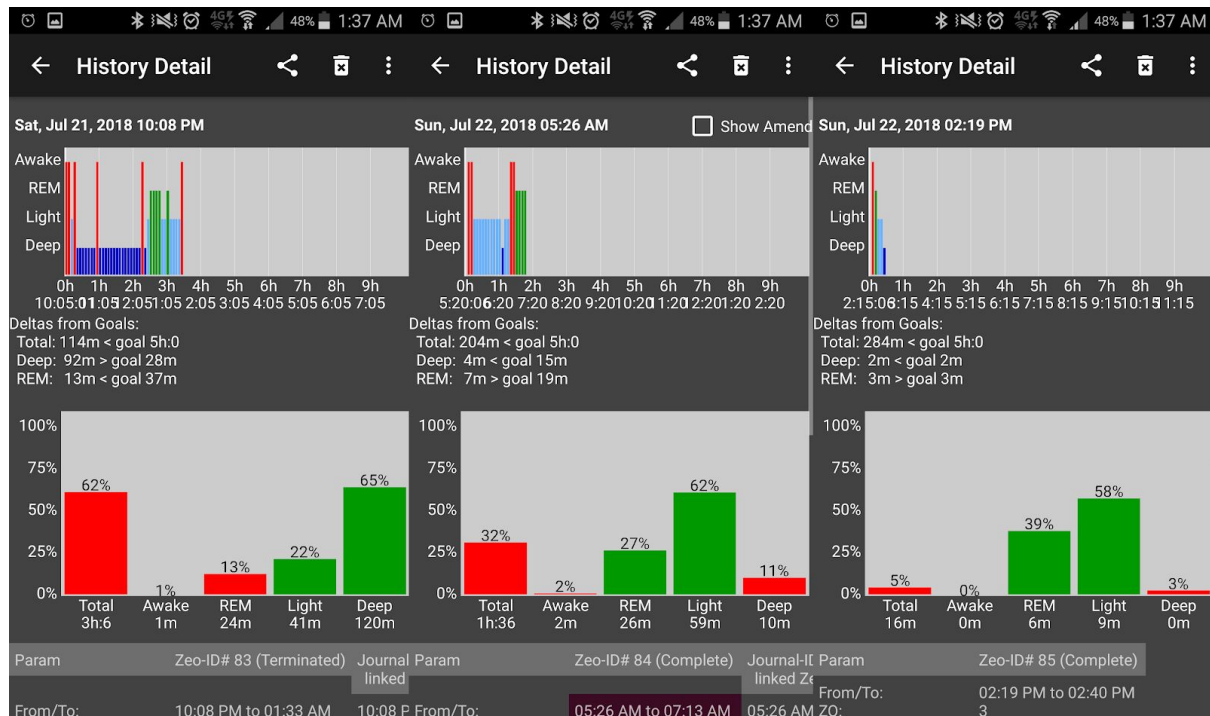
This time the the morning nap did not get recorded.

The core here is when I noticed it had felt like I was actually 'catching up' on sleep. I now believe it was actually the 'asleep when I wasn't yesterday' issue that I discussed earlier.

This day was my first experience of fatigue, between the core and the first nap. I've found that I am usually most tired during this time, as it is the circadian peak REM pressure. I suffered from similar effects adapting to other schedules, just not this early on into adaptation.

I also started suffering from deja vu dreams that were mentioned earlier; this first happened during the afternoon nap.

Day 4

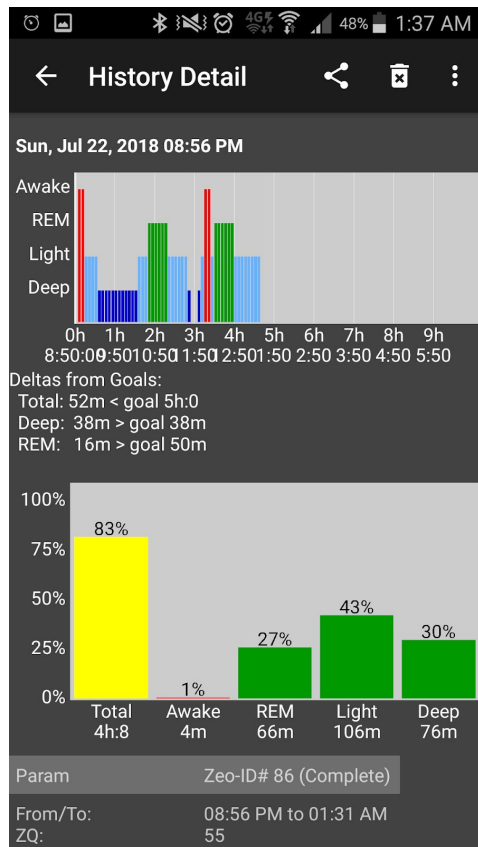


Another SWS dominated core, but not quite to the extent of the day 2 core. I was actually extremely energized in the last couple of hours before the core started. I've never had something like that happen before, although it didn't seem to affect the quality of sleep. None of those interruptions in the first core are real either.

The interruption in the second core is real, however; I vividly remember being awake for some reason.

The afternoon nap was a little strange in the sense that the sleep inertia actually took about 10 minutes to kick in after I woke up, instead of affecting me from the time I wake up.

Day 5

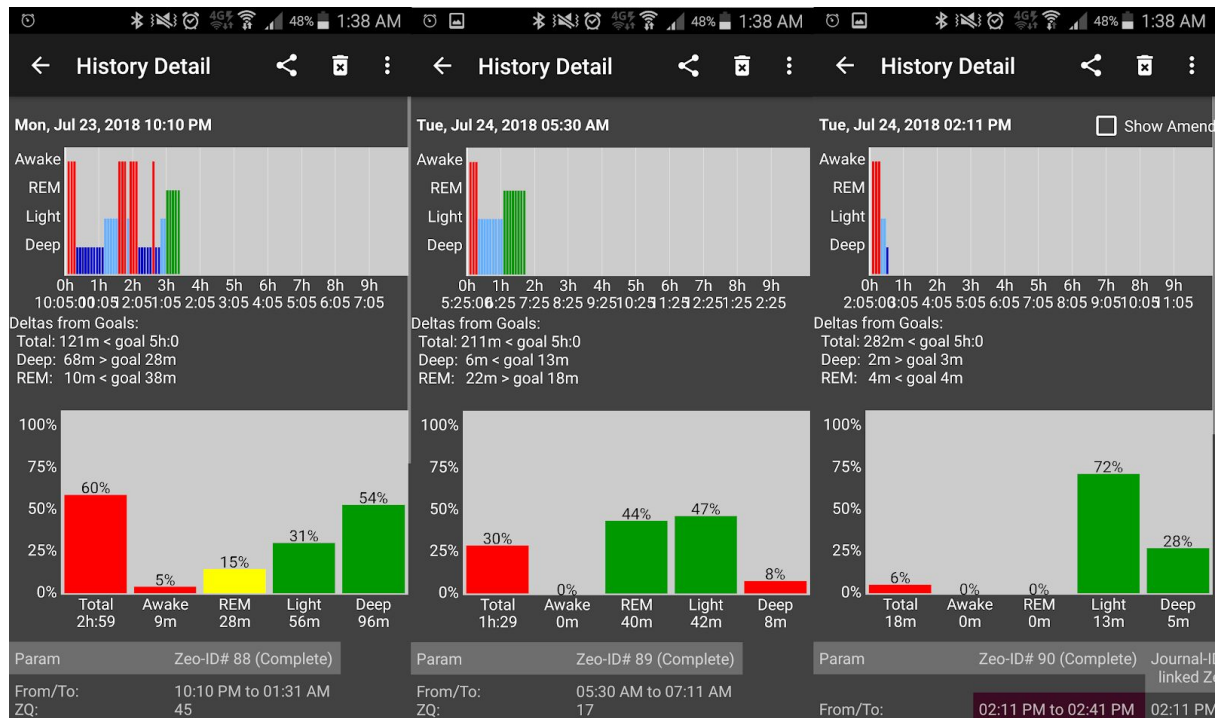


Zeo stopped recording for about 10 minutes during the core there, I'm not sure why but I think I must have knocked it off as I moved around.

Zeo didn't save the recordings of either of the naps this time.

For the hour up to the first nap, I was ridiculously tired and suffering micro sleeps in front of my computer. This was due to the 'I was asleep this time yesterday' effect that I described earlier.

Day 6

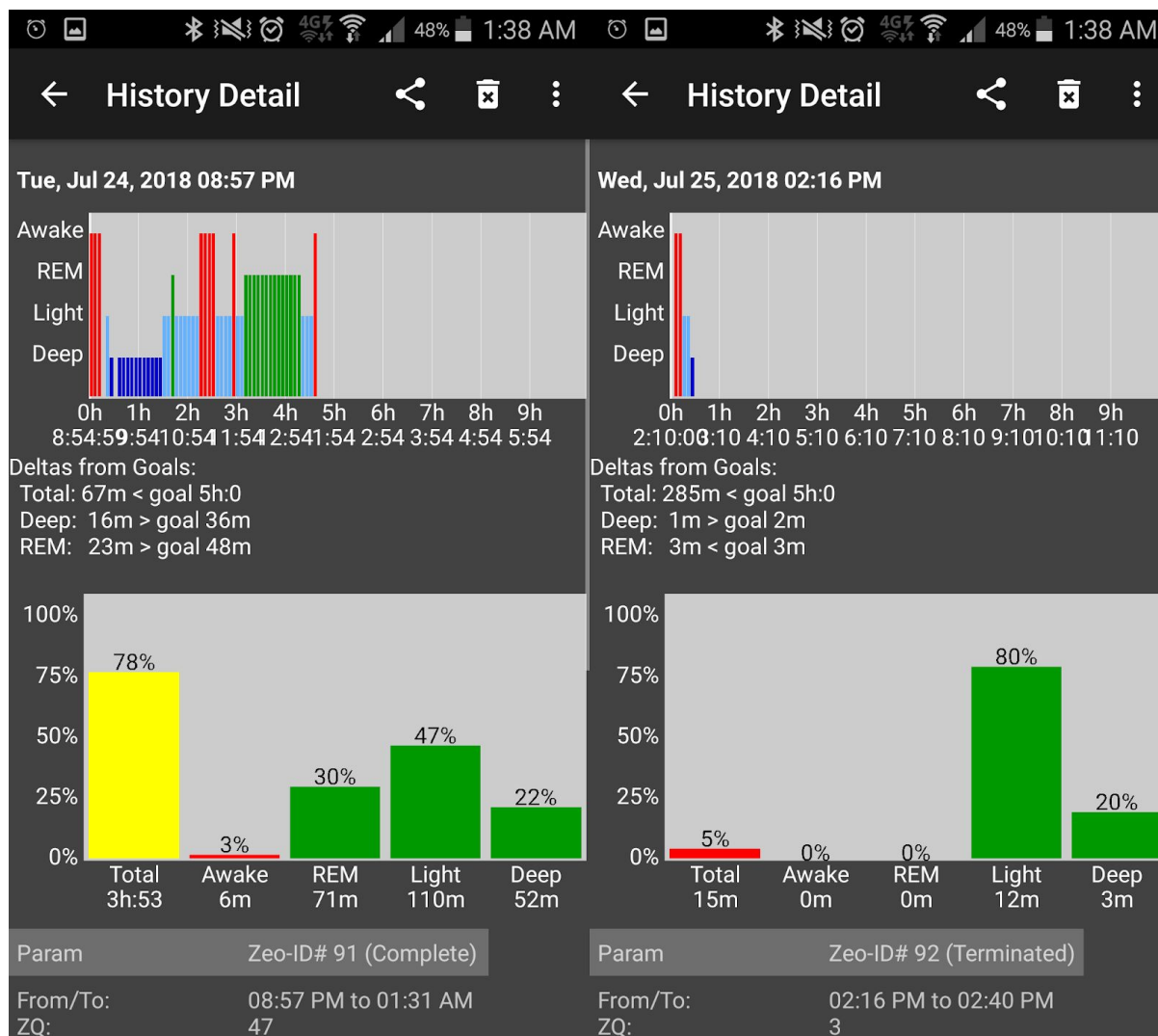


I actually remembered my first dream during the first core, although not quite for long enough to write it down. Suffered very heavily from a REM wake as well, although it had felt like an SWS wake. I'm also pretty sure none of those wakes were real. Suffered from the 'I was asleep this time yesterday' effect for the entire hour before the core began.

Microsleeps were starting to affect me before the second core, starting roughly half an hour or so before the core. And I actually had a natural wake ~10 minutes before the end of the core. There was another very heavy REM wake as well, giving me 20 minutes of sleep inertia

Because of an SWS wake from the nap, I got ~5 minutes of very heavy sleep inertia.

Day 7



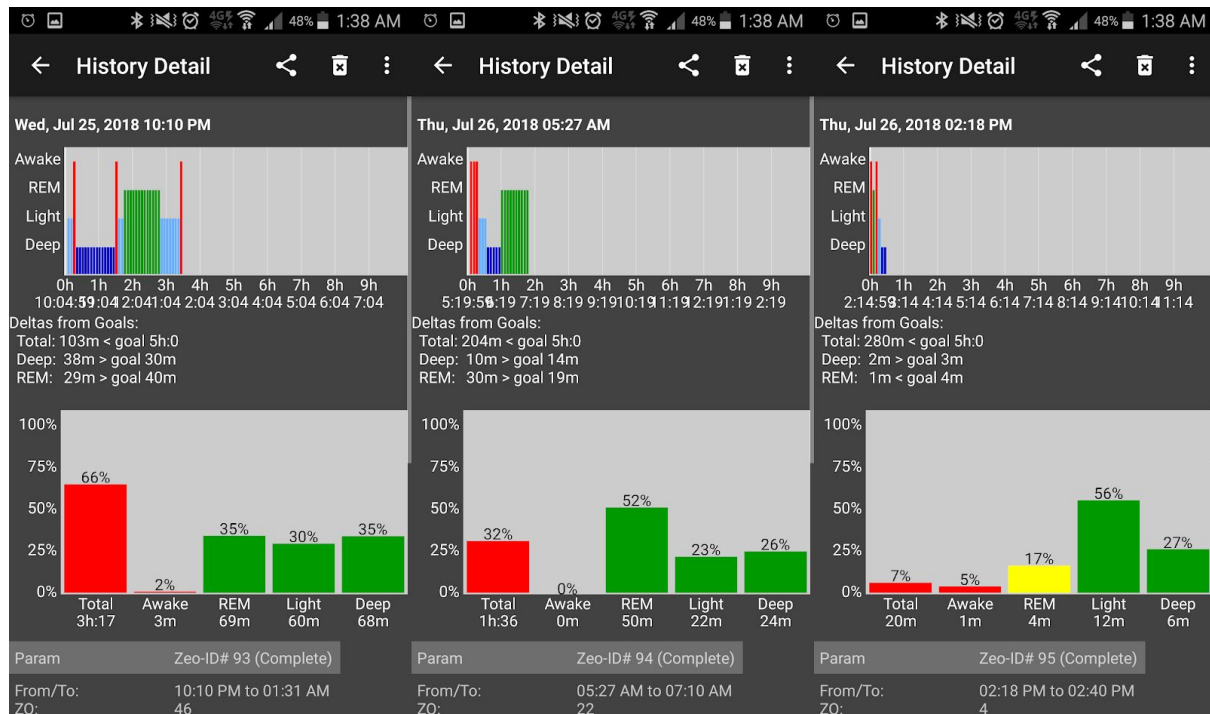
Zeo had issues saving the morning nap this time.

Those wakes during the core were real. I'm not sure why I was awake then, but they felt natural. Otherwise it felt like a decent core, little/no sleep inertia and actually felt fairly decent upon wake.

First oversleep happened today, though. I got roughly an extra hour of sleep at the start of the first nap. I'm blaming this on myself for needing more 'staying awake' skills, but all the extra tiredness was from the 'I was asleep this time yesterday' effect.

Second nap was nothing special, and I didn't feel the effects of an SWS wake at all

Day 8



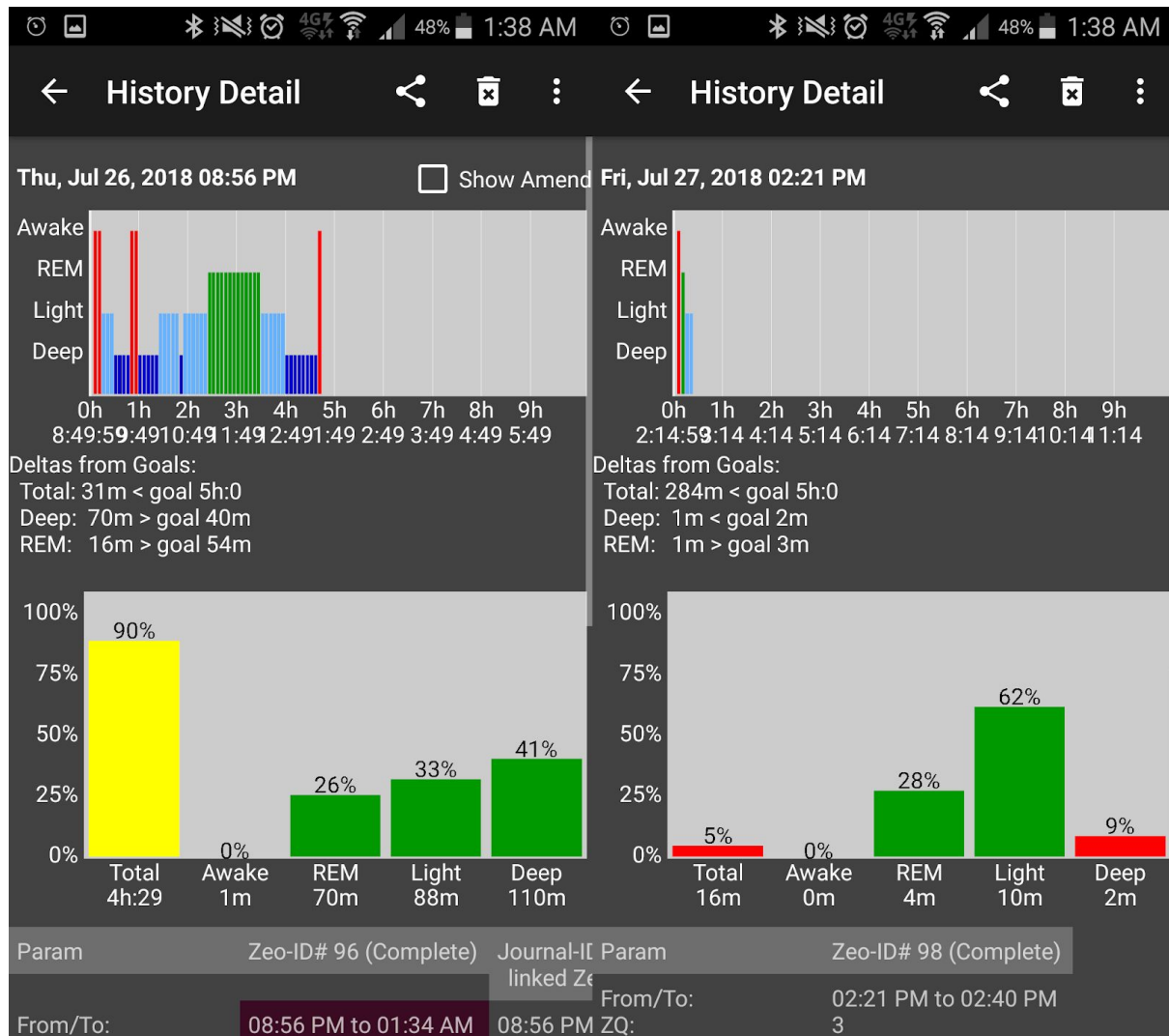
Nothing exciting happened during the first core. Although, it looks like I was slowly getting used to the lower amount of daily sleep. This resulted in more 'even' amounts of the types of sleep.

Suffered from the deja vu dreams again at the end of the second core, otherwise nothing exciting happened during it.

However, for the nap, I had rode home from uni (~4km) about an hour beforehand. That really seemed to affect it, as it seemed to take a long time to fall asleep, and it looks like there was a lot more light sleep compared to other naps so far.

I also suffered from a headache ~3 hours after the nap, which I took some painkillers for. I'm unsure if it was related to sleep debt.

Day 9



The core was pretty standard, but I don't know if that wake is real or not.

For the first nap (which zeo didn't save, again) I actually got to bed a minute late. But the important part of this nap was the microsleeps, which happened for pretty much the entire hour before nap time, which I'm blaming on the 'I was asleep this time yesterday' effect. It also became the first time I was massively disorientated regarding time.

I find polyphasic schedules cause me to lose track of time to some extent, but I think because of how the circadian was maintained during the schedule, my 'days' began much earlier than they usually would, which caused massive issues in my perception of time. I always felt like it should be many hours later than what it actually was.

After the second nap was when I called it quits. By this point my fatigue had started to affect my daily life to the point that I couldn't focus on anything and my eyes were constantly trying to adjust for whatever reason. It was comparable to what I expect

the very end of an adaption stage 3 to feel like, but on day 9 I couldn't deal with suffering like that for another several weeks.