

## **Daylight Saving Time is Leaching from Our Biological Clock**

Summer is right around the corner. Who's looking forward to more sun? First, we have to trim an hour out of our sleep.

Daylight saving time (DST) happens this Sunday! As a result, be particularly cautious on the roads during your commute. On average, [fatal traffic accidents increase by 6% in the week after](#) we forfeit that hour.

*Why do we change the clocks in the first place?* Extending daylight in the evenings of the summer was [originally imposed in the early 1900s](#) when decision-makers wanted to reduce energy-consumption. They did this by making a trade between a bright early morning for an even brighter evening.

From there, DST has been used intermittently to continue the tradition, particularly around WWI and WWII. Now, [only a third of countries currently practice some form of daylight-saving time](#). Research has come a long way since, with several modern [studies showing that DST has little-to-no proven effect on energy consumption](#).

Without energy-conservation to drive DST, the main discussion today is about

keeping longer days in the summer and increase spending for the economy. The catch is that the annual time change, especially in the spring, is exhausting at best and dangerous at most.

There is a long list of negative consequences people experience that legislators and the public didn't have the access to when DST was originally concocted.

Disrupting people's sleep patterns is more than a biannual inconvenience; it is harmful to our health and safety. The medical community collectively warns that DST increases incidents of [heart attacks, strokes, illnesses and injuries](#).

If that weren't enough, it also impacts our mental health: [depression](#), [suicide](#), [disordered eating](#), and more. Our biological clock is not meant to be tampered with.

At this point, [almost all states are rushing to drop the cumbersome time-change](#) and replace it with permanent time. Exactly *how* we should accomplish this has people divided. The debate is whether the permanent time should borrow an hour of daylight every morning of the year to gift to the evening (DST)—*or* return to standard time (ST) for good.

The irony some people haven't realized yet is that nature already extends the

evenings in our summer. Adding another hour to those same days only makes it *seem* like we are making a meaningful change.

The difference between winter and summer sunsets is the same whether we stay on permanent ST (pST) or move to pDST. Between winter and summer, days shift from 8 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> hour days in the winter to just under 16-hour days in the summer.

This means that our [latest winter sunrise is 7:47 am. That would be moved to 8:47 am on pDST](#), shifting morning commutes to school and work into the darkness the entire season.

Sending kiddos to school in the dark has many parents concerned about their safety. Researchers add to this concern by showing that adolescents need to [start school no earlier than 8:30 for their health and academic performance](#). This fact has led many schools to shift start times accordingly, something that would be reversed if DST were to become permanent.

Most people agree that eliminating the biannual time change is the next logical step, given what we know now. What will surprise some is that the [American Academy of Sleep Medicine](#) along with many other medical experts caution against *any* DST, whether it's permanent or not. The extensive research has proven

that *any disturbance to our biological circadian rhythm is detrimental to our health and safety.*

Any remaining argument against pST is rooted in a social calendar or an extra hour of consumerism for business revenue. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we have enough of a human rights lens to rethink prioritizing capitalism or arbitrary policies at the expense of our physical and mental health.

Policy and government were created to support people's life and liberty. Our health and safety should be prioritized above all else.

If legislator is still entertaining capitalism as the determining factor for how we proceed, they should consider the cost involved in decreased productivity at work. DST also [diminishes executive functioning such as focus and decision-making](#), leading to an increase in workplace accidents.

On that note, the sicker people are, the more expensive medical costs are. It is logical to argue that the illnesses and injuries resulting from an unnatural time also generates an increase to medical costs... along with the taxes and healthcare premiums that fund them.

Given the choice between pST or pDST, it's clear that preserving our well-being and a shred of light on our morning commutes is the best move forward rather than exchanging that for longer summer days. What's more, opting out of DST is already legal according to the Uniform Time Act of 1966. Let's fix this now, together, based on science. Permanent standard time needs to happen.