

Switch to Daylight Saving Time doesn't have to cost you sleep

10 March 2016, by Kim Irwin



With Daylight Saving Time coming up this weekend, Dr. Alon Avidan, director of the UCLA Sleep Disorders Center, has some suggestions for staff and faculty on the best ways to adjust to the time change as we "spring forward" one hour on Saturday night before we go to bed ... or, if we want to be more precise, at 2 a.m. on Sunday.

Though a bit simplistic, a good rule of thumb is that it takes about one day to adjust for each hour of [time change](#), Avidan says. There is significant individual variation, however. Here are some tips on sleeping well this weekend.

- Prepare for the anticipated circadian shift by going to bed earlier one or two nights ahead of the change, so you are already accustomed to the new schedule.
- Ensure that you are not sleep-deprived ahead of the schedule change. You should be getting seven to eight hours of sound sleep each night ahead of the shift.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine too close to bedtime, as these substances disrupt sleep architecture and lead to fragmented sleep.

- Use [light exposure](#) to your advantage. Light is the most important circadian cue. Light exposure is linked to the release of the hormone melatonin. It is, therefore, critical to limit exposure to bright light during the evening. This means no computers, TV or tablets at least two hours before bedtime. Get plenty of [sun exposure](#) in the morning so you'll feel alert during the day and be sleepy by nightfall.
- Avoid excessive naps, except for a brief 15- to 20-minute snooze between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., should you need it. Excessive napping, especially when you're trying to counter the effects of sleepiness during this transition, may take away the drive for sleep and delay the transition to the new time schedule.
- Keep your bedroom dark, quiet, well-ventilated and at a comfortable, slightly cooler temperature throughout the night.
- Create a consistent and relaxing bedtime routine, such as reading a pleasant book or listening to soothing music.

Provided by University of California, Los Angeles

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