

# Daylight Time

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Every time we change our clocks from standard time to daylight time each spring, and from daylight time back to standard time each fall, there is a chorus of voices calling for an end to the practice. I agree. But that chorus wants it to end the wrong way. They want permanent daylight time. I want permanent standard time. Here's why.

A Texas republican senator, speaking in favor of daylight time, said "I would rather have an extra hour of light in the evening than an extra hour of darkness in the morning.". His ignorance is appalling. An extra hour of light in the evening costs an extra hour of darkness in the morning. Daylight time does not create daylight. It doesn't even shift daylight from morning to evening. There is nothing we can do to create, destroy, or shift daylight. Daylight time just shifts our daily activities an hour earlier. I wonder how many people advocating permanent daylight time have the misconception that it somehow creates an hour of daylight.

Time zones were invented in 1876 by Sir Sandford Fleming, a Canadian railway engineer. He divided the world into 24 time zones, one for each hour of the day. Each time zone is centered on a longitude that is a multiple of 15 degrees ( $360/24 = 15$ ), so that 12 o'clock noon is the time when the sun is highest in the sky. Before 1876, every village and hamlet had their own time, making train schedules impossible. With standardized time zones, Fleming replaced chaos with order. Since then, people have been chipping away at this order, bit by bit. Each boundary change has a good, local reason, but the result is a little more chaos. The worst of that is in the middle of the Pacific Ocean where the line has become a curlicue. The invention of daylight time is also a departure from standard time zones.

Being on daylight time is exactly equivalent to joining the next time zone east. Eastern Daylight Time is Atlantic Standard Time. On daylight time, mid day, when the sun is at its highest, is 1pm. The letters "pm" stand for "post meridiem", which means "after midday". So, under daylight time, mid day occurs at the time we call "one hour after midday" (1pm).

There is a way that we can have our cake and eat it too; we can keep Sir Sandford's orderly standard time, and have an extra hour of daylight in the evening. It's so simple. Instead of working from 9am to 5pm, work from 8am to 4pm. Move all our daily activities one hour earlier without changing the clocks. That is the equivalent of daylight time: it gives us an extra hour of daylight after the end of the working day or school day. It doesn't require legislation. For some people, it can be a personal choice. For others, the choice can be made by their employer, or their school board.

Let's stop the nonsense of changing our clocks by sticking to standard time, and let every person and employer and school board arrange their working and leisure hours as they see fit.

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