7 Ways to Avoid Falling Back When We Spring Forward with Daylight Saving Time

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As entrepreneurs, most of us have traveled across time zones and do so frequently for both work and leisure. And do we complain? So despite knowing that it will happen, why do many of us complain every year when the clocks spring forward by one hour for Daylight Saving Time (DST)?

I encourage you to take a different approach this year. First, the most important thing you can do is to change your attitude towards the clocks springing forward. Here's how: Mentally prepare yourself in advance, and tell yourself and those around you that DST is nothing to complain about because we face it every year. We're better off preparing for it and finding the silver linings and benefits of the time change.

For example, more daylight in the evening allows for after-dinner walks. Such a walk fosters family time, lowers your blood glucose level, and it's likely a deterrent from excess evening snacking or drinking. Is that a win or a win?

I recall weekday mornings from past DST days when everyone in my house was slow to move, and nobody except for the clocks was springing forward. Friends called me to talk about their double doses of caffeine and how they yelled more at their kids to rush them out the door for school.

Research shows increased car accidents and injuries at work after DST because our already sleep-deprived country is less

alert. So, while we will still feel the time change because of our circadian rhythm, the 24-hour cycle that's governed by our body's internal clock, below are some tips that should help make DST more manageable and help you better prepare not to fall back when the clock springs forward.

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1. Gradually prepare yourself with an earlier bedtime

You may not feel tired at night but try to schedule an earlier bedtime before DST. By moderately making these changes before the time change, you'll begin daylight saving time having almost adapted to the time change.

From exercise to meals to your bedtime routine, move everything forward by 15 minutes each day. Particularly in the evening, be disciplined about washing your face, brushing your teeth, going off screens or whatever sleep routines you have earlier than normal.

2. Don't snooze, rather wake up 15 minutes earlier

I've never used the snooze button. I feel it's torture and not efficient nor motivating for the morning routine you've set out to do, so I mentally trained myself never to snooze. Now for you snoozers, you can call me crazy but give yourself some wiggle room during the week of DST for the morning time. Most of us adjusting to the time change will be slow-moving, and rushing will lead to a stressful morning, so use the extra time to *prevent* this rushed and chaotic feeling.

The same goes for getting kids ready for school. Time is valuable, and the extra time will make the morning less

hectic. Just please do not “snooze,” as this will keep your circadian rhythm from adjusting to the time change.

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3. Prioritize daylight exposure

Get your sunshine early, within an hour of waking if you can, even if it’s stepping outdoors for a 5-minute gratitude practice, walking the dog or looking towards the light of the day while taking deep breaths. Light is the central driver of our circadian rhythm, and this morning sunlight alone will help your body’s internal clock best acclimate to the new timing of light and dark.

I’m not a biohacker, but I do keep on top of the latest research and science in health and wellness, and I encourage you to check out this guide from Neuroscience Professor at Stanford, Dr. Andrew Huberman. Even on a cloudy day, natural light provides more brightness that helps to align the circadian rhythm than artificial indoor lighting.

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4. Keep active and keep moving

I personally look forward to and need my morning workouts as they help get my body, brain and soul moving and kickstart my day. But if exercising first thing in the morning isn’t what you enjoy, plan to get outside or move every day this week, even if just a brisk mid-morning or lunchtime walk (or even a ‘sweatwork’ walk meeting), which will energize all parties involved and help everyone ease into a better night of sleep.

Added bonus? Walking as little as 2 to 5 minutes after any meal will help lower your blood glucose level, according to a

2022 study in the Journal of Sports Medicine.

5. Eat well and go easy on the caffeine

Proper nutrition is directly correlated to sleep. Eliminate added sugars, stay well hydrated with water and electrolytes and focus on eating good sources of protein, carbs and fat, such as fish high in omega 3s, nuts, vegetables and fruits. Eat dinner at least a few hours before bed, and limit spicy and heavy foods.

Whenever my schedule allows, I prefer to eat what I call "linner," meaning that it's a combo lunch/dinner, and I eat this meal between 3-4 p.m. If this isn't conducive to your schedule or ability to prepare a healthy meal, try making lunch the bigger meal of your day. Be aware of caffeine in beverages, including soda which is also loaded with sugar.

It's human and forgivable that most people will be doubling and even tripling up their coffee and green tea this week just to *survive*. But don't overdo it. Too much caffeine will make you crash, so aim to stop drinking caffeine after 2 p.m. And particularly for this week, plan to ease up on alcohol intake as alcohol can interfere with a good night's sleep.

Related: Is Caffeine Boosting or Sabotaging Your Productivity?

6. Ask for and give yourself some grace

If your boss is flexible, ask if you can get to the office a little later for a couple of days so you can take the time to happily ease into the time change and avoid sleep-deprived and frustrated commuters at rush hour.

If you lead a team or company, have a little compassion. Offer

your team a slightly later start to the morning in exchange for meeting a specific deadline that week or having them agree to 15–30 minutes of fresh air early in the morning or the middle of the day. Happy employees = productive employees.

7. Power nap

More health and wellness professionals, experts and entrepreneurs are treating themselves to power naps for rejuvenation and mental wellness. The key for napping is 30 minutes or less; otherwise, you'll feel like you got hit by a bus when you wake up! A nap should both calm your nervous system and energize you.

Early afternoon naps are best, as naps late in the day can make it difficult to sleep. Not necessary, but if you're curious about prioritizing a deeper night's sleep, look into sleep tools such as weighted blankets, sleep meditation apps and light therapy.

With these tips, you should be able to spring forward along with the clocks. As human beings, and especially as entrepreneurs, we are strong, and our minds and bodies can adjust. So when the clocks spring forward, shift your mindset to when the alarm goes off at 6 a.m. on Monday morning, and *think* that it's 6 a.m. instead of saying, "I can't believe it's really 5 a.m.!" The better we prepare, the better we position ourselves for positive outcomes and longer, brighter days full of sunshine.

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