

12 Ways to Own Daylight Saving Time (And Not Feel Exhausted)

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The good news: You're about to enjoy more sunlight and less cold, depressing winter darkness. But to get there, you have to lose an hour of sleep this Sunday morning when daylight saving time kicks in. (Sorry to cut into Sunday sexy-time, but we all have to make sacrifices here!) According to the Better Sleep Council, the Monday after daylight saving time begins is truly the worst—no, really, scientists have proved it. There are increased traffic accidents, less productive workdays, lower stock prices, and an overall vibe of grumpiness. Count us out of all that—because we're taking this advice from nutritionists, personal trainers, and sleep experts share how to outsmart DST and stay energized.

By Michele Laufik

Step One: Workout

Rise and Work Out

Ugh, we know, but exercising in the A.M. can actually help your body adjust to the time change, says **Franci Cohen, nutritionist and certified fitness trainer.** That's because it increases the production of serotonin—a chemical in the brain that regulates mood, appetite, and sleep. Even a brisk morning walk can help get you back on track.

Step Two: Power Down

Turn Off Electronics Before Bed

In order to get a solid 40 winks, you need to power down before bed—no laptop, phone, TV, nada. Too much light can suppress melatonin production (the hormone that helps us sleep), explains Daniel Neides, M.D., medical director for Cleveland Clinic's Wellness Institute. And the blue light that electronic devices emit can be an especially potent snooze killer.

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Step Three: Let the Sun In

Let the Morning Sunshine In

A dose of bright sunlight as soon as you wake up energizes you, explains Dr. Neides. Light sends a powerful signal to your brain telling you it's time to get up and at 'em. So open up those curtains or, better yet, go for a morning walk outdoors. The added sun exposure will boost your vitamin D production, yielding more energy throughout the day, Cohen explains.

Step Four: Hydrate

Drink Water

Water helps your heart pump more efficiently; if you're dehydrated, your body has to work harder to carry blood to your cells, resulting in fatigue. Can't seem to squeeze the recommended two liters of H₂O into your day? Up your intake of foods that naturally contain water, such as watermelons, oranges, and grapefruit. And if it's more of a taste thing, add fruit slices to your water for an extra kick.

Step Five: Eat

Eat Breakfast

Start the day with an energy-packed breakfast, including a high-antioxidant fruit such as blueberries or blackberries, a healthy fat like nuts or seeds, and a cup of raw or toasted oats, suggests Robert Ferguson, nutritionist and CEO of Diet Free Life. Feel free to drink a cup of coffee or tea too—it won't hurt.

Step Six: Punch It Out

Throw Some Punches

To beat an afternoon slump, personal trainer Jonathan Angelilli suggests busting out a punching sequence for a quick pick-me-up. Punch straight out at shoulder height with your right hand, and bring your left hand down to your solar plexus (the top of the abdomen). Then, switch and punch with your right hand, bringing the left down to hover in front of your upper stomach. Complete 50 punches as fast as you can safely. “Speed is the key here; it quickly jacks up the heart rate and makes you super alert,” he says.

Step Seven: Breathe

Breathe Deeply

You should be a master breather by now, right? Well, there’s actually a good chance you’re doing it wrong. Short, shallow breaths (which usually occur when we’re stressed) bring in less air, causing physical and mental exhaustion. Instead, aim for a deep inhale—your belly should fill like a balloon as you breathe in—and slowly deflate as you exhale.

Step Eight: Skip the Drink

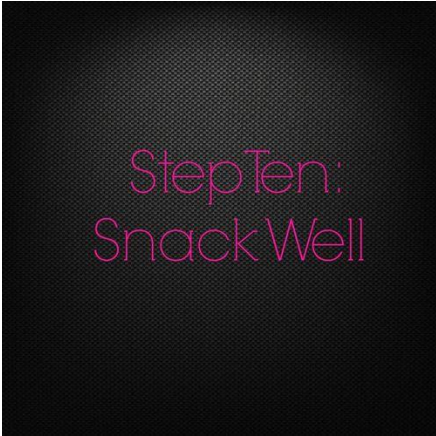
Avoid Alcohol

Although that glass of wine may help you nod off quicker, it will ultimately backfire. “Alcohol can disrupt normal sleep patterns, leaving you feeling restless and lethargic,” Cohen says. (In studies, alcohol has been shown to reduce REM sleep, the most restorative stage.) Instead, try a cup of soothing chamomile tea before bed to help calm your mind and body.

Step Nine: Stand Up

Don’t Sit All Day

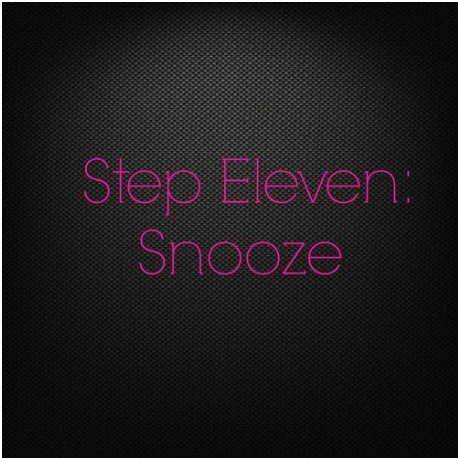
It’s harder to fall asleep on your feet than on your tush, so if you’re feeling drowsy, stand up at work. If you don’t have a standing desk, take a phone call while upright, or go on a quick coffee run.



Step Ten: Snack Well

Snack Smarter

If you've got the midday munchies or are feeling sluggish, reach for whole foods, like an apricot or grapefruit, that are high in glucose as opposed to fructose, Ferguson says. Glucose helps boost your muscle and brain function, while items with lots of fructose (ahem, daily afternoon soda habit) can have the opposite effect. For a sweet alternative, nibble on antioxidant-rich dark chocolate—you can't be cranky about that.



Step Eleven: Snooze

Take a Nap

We can't all pull a George Costanza and doze under our desk, but if you can swing it (somewhere else, preferably), a 20-minute power nap is your best bet, says Angelilli. You'll improve your alertness and motor skills—just don't let your head hit the keyboard before you find a proper place to snooze.



Step Twelve: Eat Early

Dine Early

If you're already suffering from exhaustion, your late-night dining might be the culprit. Angelilli recommends eating around 7 P.M. (8 P.M. at the latest) to allow your body to digest properly for a better night's rest. Not only is it tougher to fall asleep with a full belly, it can also be seriously unhealthy. Melatonin impacts the way food is metabolized, resulting in an increased risk of some health conditions, such as heart disease, Dr. Neides says.

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