

WashU Expert: This year, let's make standard time permanent

By [Talia Ogliore](#) • October 24, 2019

Never again.

After we turn back the clocks one hour on the morning of Nov. 3, Washington University in St. Louis chronobiologist [Erik Herzog](#) wants us to just keep it that way.

“Just lock it in,” Herzog said. “Forever.”

Herzog is a professor of biology in Arts & Sciences and president of the [Society for Research on Biological Rhythms \(SRBR\)](#), a scientific organization dedicated to the study of biological clocks and sleep. He is often asked his opinion about time changes.



Herzog

The SRBR recently released a formal position paper, titled “[Why Should We Abolish Daylight Saving Time?](#)” The researchers have been carefully following the initiatives of the European Commission and California Proposition 7 to abandon the annual clock-time changes in spring and autumn.

There is a consensus among experts that the advantages of permanent standard time outweigh those of switching back and forth to daylight saving time annually — or of switching to daylight saving time permanently.

In the SRBR position paper, the researchers recommend:

- If we want to improve human health, we should not fight against our body clock.
- We should return to standard time — which is when the “sun clock” time most closely matches the “social clock” time — throughout the year.
- This solution would fix both the acute and the chronic problems of daylight saving time.

The science behind this choice is clear, the researchers said. Living creatures have a body clock that creates daily rhythms. For humans, this body clock organizes our biology, such as when we eat and sleep, when we can run fastest and when our brain works at its best. The body clock must be made to match our 24-hour environment.

Throughout the year, standard time will be healthier than daylight saving time in terms of sleep, cardiac function, weight, cancer risk and alcohol and tobacco consumption, to name a few examples.

To help the public and politicians understand the benefits of permanent standard time, SRBR has put together [a helpful list of resources](#) on this topic.

“We must recognize the important role of sunlight in shaping our daily behavior and the important role of our body clock in maintaining our health and well-being,” Herzog said.