

# Living in Different Times

A growing body of evidence from human physiology, traffic and pedestrian safety, and sleep research suggests that people should be **active in the light**, **winding down in dim light**, and **asleep in darkness**. Adhering to these principles can improve health and safety. Our twice-yearly shift between Standard Time (ST) and Daylight Saving Time (DST) can work against these principles. Calls for permanent ST or DST have been made but adhering to either of these year-round has both advantages and disadvantages. Aligning **solar time** (daylight/darkness) and **social time** (the clock) with **biological time** (individual circadian system) will forever remain a challenge for society. Regardless of society's choice, we as individuals can follow the principles of being **active in the light**, **winding down in dim light**, and being **asleep in the darkness** in two ways: we can change our activity and we can change our light/darkness exposures.



## Solar Condition

## Possible Action

<p><b>Dark Mornings</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spend 30 minutes or more under bright electric lighting such as a light therapy box (change the light/darkness)</li> <li>• Wear bright reflective clothing if walking and use high beams as much as possible if driving (change the light/darkness)</li> <li>• Advocate for later school days (change our activity)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Dark Evenings</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear bright reflective clothing if walking outdoors and use high beams as much as possible if driving (change the light/darkness)</li> <li>• Avoid using electronic devices (change the light/darkness); this will help align your biological time with the social time when you have to get up and thereby help extend your sleep duration</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Light Mornings</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While sleeping, wear a sleep mask or use dark curtains over windows (change the light/darkness); this will help prevent your sleep from being disrupted</li> <li>• After waking, walk outside for 30 minutes or more (change our activity); this will help align your biological time with social time, making you sleepier in the evening when you should be going to bed</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Light Evenings</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear sunglasses or "blue-blocking" glasses outside (change the light/darkness); this will also help align your biological time with social time, getting you to sleep earlier and extend your sleep duration</li> <li>• Avoid using electronic devices (change the light/darkness); see 'Dark Evenings' above</li> </ul>	

The diagrams below show one example of how a person might apply the three principles. The exact choice depends upon the individual's preferences and circumstances, but should follow the principles of being **active in the light** (not just daylight), **winding down in dim light** (not just twilight), and **at rest in darkness** (not just nighttime).

