

# Troubleshooting Guide

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Surviving Daylight Savings



THE PEACEFUL SLEEPER  
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Ugh, is there anything worse than Daylight Savings Time? Yes, probably. But it still sucks. You're finally in a good routine and you've gotten predictable sleep and then for no apparent reason we decide to change our clocks twice a year.

Not to worry, friend. I have some tips for you to make the time change smooth and easy. Or at least smooth-ER and easiER. I'm not a magician. But hopefully it'll feel like it!

## Spring Forward

In the springtime we move our clocks FORWARD one hour. This means that at 2 am on Sunday the clocks will magically jump forward to 3am. But your kids are going to wake up on their own clocks. If they usually wake up at 7, they'll wake up at 8:00 (feeling like it's 7). I personally feel like the Spring DST is 1,000 times easier than the Fall one, but naptimes and bedtime are going to be thrown off unless you intervene. So how do you do that?

To combat spring Daylight Savings Time, we intervene mostly in the morning.

The idea here is that if they're waking at 8 now feeling like it's 7, we need them to wake up earlier to be on track. Although I hate to wake up a sleeping baby, it's easiest to adjust to the new time if you do so.

Here are 2 main options:

1. Use melatonin

Melatonin is the hormone we naturally produce to regulate our sleep cycles. When used sparingly, it's a super easy and effective sleep intervention. Using melatonin resets the sleep cycle and it's not habit forming. I don't recommend using it on a regular basis because you don't want to run the risk of reducing their natural production of the hormone, but if it's only used every once in a while, it won't negatively impact them. Occasions like DST or travel where you're switching time zones are perfect.

If you want to try this, put your kiddo to bed Saturday night at bedtime. WAKE them up in the morning a little earlier than their body would wake them up naturally. If your little one usually sleeps until 7, on Sunday they'll wake up by themselves at 8. So instead, YOU wake them up at 7/7:30. Put them down for their first nap on time (or up to 30 minutes late). Don't let them sleep longer than they usually do. Follow the rest of the day's schedule according to the new, adjusted time, and give them melatonin at bedtime. You might have to repeat this on day 2, but you won't need melatonin to help them go to bed more than one or two nights.

Then you'll be adjusted! Viola!

This is obviously my first choice because it's so dang easy. But I totally understand that many mamas out there don't want to give their children "unnecessary" stuff.

If you're going to go this route, let's talk specifics about melatonin: the dosage for tiny kiddos is .25-.33 mg. Be careful when buying melatonin at the store because most are dosed at 3-5 mg which is waaaaay too much for tiny bodies. You aren't going to hurt them, but that dose is too high and you'll end up making their sleep wonky.

My favorite melatonin is called "Tired Teddies". It's already perfectly dosed for them and it's a yummy bubblegum flavor. You can also crush it and mix it with milk or applesauce if you want. I've given melatonin to my kiddos as young as 12 months. The bottle recommends it for children 2+ (I'm assuming because it's chewable and we don't want anyone choking). Please consult with your pediatrician. And follow your heart.

They also sell liquid melatonin that's really convenient. Ideally, you'll want to buy 1mg liquid. This one is super easy to dose correctly. Once you get into 3 or 5 mg liquid it's tough to get the dropper dosed right.

BEWARE of this one: <http://amzn.to/2FpnDLO> They might have changed things back, but the last time I purchased it I discovered that the preservative they use in the liquid is alcohol! Eeek! While you're not going to get your baby drunk off the stuff, there's no reason to expose tiny developing brains to alcohol. Also, many studies suggest that alcohol directly affects the brain's natural production of melatonin so this will majorly backfire.

I learned this the hard way once and it was miserable. We were driving back from CA late at night so I gave my 4-year-old melatonin to help her fall asleep in the car. Worked like a charm. But then the next 3 days her sleep was horrendous. I'd used melatonin before but this was a new bottle and I swear it had ruined her. I looked back at the bottle, did some research, and realized that even though it was miraculous the first night, the resulting nights when I hadn't used it were totally ruined. Never again!

## 2. Slowly prep for DST over the span of 4 days

We can't just magically change the clocks and expect their biological clocks to adjust. As adults, our sleep is thrown off by an hour or more all the time, but little toddler brains aren't nearly as flexible. They've been on the same routine for months and then boom! All the sudden it's different.

To combat this, take 4 days and adjust them 15 minutes per day. This is best done in the mornings. Babies and toddlers don't usually go to bed early very effectively. They'll play and stall and ask for a million drinks, etc. They won't fall asleep unless they're tired (which is the biggest struggle of Spring DST). So instead, wake them up 15 minutes early in the morning and adjust the whole day's schedule by 15 minutes. Repeat for 4 days and then by the time DST hits you're on schedule!

## Fall BACK

In the fall, we move our clocks back an hour. This means that in the wee hours of Sunday morning, we experience 2am twice. So, what does that mean for your bundle of joy? If she usually wakes up at 7am, she's going to be bright eyed and ready to party at 6am. I'm not a morning person, so the thought of the new permanent wake up time being 6am is suuuuper not fun for me.

To combat fall Daylight Savings, we intervene mostly at bedtime.

Keep your little one up late on Saturday night. As you know, later bedtime doesn't always lead to compensating with a later awakening Sunday morning, but we can always hope. Then, when it's 6am and they're ready to party you leave them in bed until 7. For babies, feed them if they're hungry and put them right back to bed. They should be happiest first thing in the morning and they probably won't protest much. You can even leave a few toys or books for them to play with in the dark and when the clock strikes 7 go in super bubbly and awake and signal that NOW it's time to party. Put them down for naps about 30 min earlier than the usual clock time, which will be 30 min more awake time than usual (make sense?? So we're splitting the difference). But try to push bedtime back to the new time on the clock.

Again, here we have 2 main options:

1. Use Melatonin

As stated above, melatonin in the form of "Tired Teddies" is my favorite. Simply keep your little one up late, give them a tired teddy and viola. I get a lot of questions about the safety of melatonin in little kids and wondering how early it can be given. Please consult with your pediatrician. I've given it to my kids as young as 12 months, but I do so VERY infrequently. It is simply a tool to be used once or twice to get their natural body clock back on track.

## 2. Slowly prep for DST over the span of 4 days

Again, just like I detailed above, if we shift the schedule 15 minutes per day for 4 days they'll adjust pretty seamlessly. The difference here is that instead of waking baby up 15 minutes earlier, we're putting her to bed 15 minutes later and letting her stay in her crib 15 min longer in the morning.

For bigger kiddos, an OK! To wake clock can be super helpful for the transition. Just have them stay in their rooms until the clock turns green. If you need more help, I've got an "extending wake up time" troubleshooting guide [here](#) that outlines more principles to get your little one to wake up later.

### **A few other tips to keep in mind:**

- **Be patient.** Know that your little one is going to have wonky sleep for a day (or 4) and prepare yourself to manage the chaos, tantrums and meltdowns gracefully.
- **Manage YOUR sleep.** Take melatonin Saturday night if you have to, but go to bed early. I hate to break it to you, but often the hardest part of DST is that YOUR sleep got robbed and now you're a grumpy monster and you're dealing with smaller grumpy monsters. No fun. I promise I'm not judging, I'm the queen of sleep deprived mommy-monster. I'm passionate about kids sleep to protect my own children from that version of myself. It's not pretty.
- **Use blackout curtains** or put blankets over the windows. It's hard for excitable young kiddos to go to bed when it's still light outside and they have some kind of evidence they're going to bed earlier than they did the night before.

- **Preserve the routine.** Try as much as possible to keep the routine the same. I have church for 3 hours on Sundays, which always throws off that day's sleep schedule. When babies and toddlers are little, they're SUPER inflexible so DST plus another activity that pushes naptime off is too much to handle. Call me a heathen, but I think the big man upstairs will understand if you skip second or third hour to keep some amount of normalcy this week. Avoid making other plans like brunches or big family activities that will either throw off naptime or cause you stress if your little bundle of joy is a tyrant.

You WILL adjust! You can do this.

If your sleep is already a mess and DST just adds to the chaos, head over to amazon and grab a copy of my short and sweet sleep guide and check out the other troubleshooting guides I have on my website. It's quick and fun to read, and can easily be devoured in an hour or two. I know you're too busy to read a million sleep training books so I distilled all the basics in one convenient, approachable way.

Or if you want individual consultations or troubleshooting, don't hesitate to reach out! [thepeacefulesleeper@gmail.com](mailto:thepeacefulesleeper@gmail.com). And if you're not already following me on Instagram, do so! [@the.peaceful.sleeper](https://www.instagram.com/the.peaceful.sleeper).

Happy Sleeping!