

The Economist explains

Changing the clocks is unpopular. Why do it?

The practice gives people a micro dose of jet lag, and can even be harmful

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In the 18th century Benjamin Franklin mooted the idea of moving the clocks forward in the summer. But the practice really took hold during the first world war. Britain, France and Germany calculated that by adding an extra hour's daylight in the evening, a saving could be made on coal. This, in turn, would help the war effort. Later, other benefits suggested themselves. It might increase consumer spending, as shoppers are encouraged to stay out later into the evening. It might even reduce crime. As the ne'er-do-well's adage might go: "the longer the daylight, the less I do wrong."

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reason. Although it has not been proven conclusively, many scientists think that changing the clocks messes with humans' circadian rhythms. It is, says one, akin to injecting a micro dose of jet lag. This may increase the chances of heart attacks and strokes. It could also be that car accidents increase, as drivers used to commuting in the daylight, for example, suddenly have to do so in the dark (or vice versa). Productivity may go down, too. Perhaps most inconvenient for businesses is the fact that countries may change their clocks at different times. Most of Europe