

# ENVIRO NEWS

## SPRING FORWARD - FALL BACK.

Falling back into darkness when setting back the clock need not set you back. We've yet to fully wane toward the shortest day, but the shock of the time change at the end of October, together with the bracing realization that four or five months of winter is stretching ahead, makes many people SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder).

For some, though, this is a joyous time when the winter wonderland beckons and rejuvenates. But while light may be key to promoting an inner glow, it needn't turn into skyrocketing energy bills.

Make sure you metabolise some vitamin D each day by getting outside during the short daylight hours, regardless of the temperature. When inside, try changing your indoor bulbs to full spectrum lighting, instead of cool white. Everything will look fresher, more real and food will look more appetizing. Headaches may dissipate and you may even feel more energized by mimicking the full spectrum indoors.

Have you seen those great new retrofitted street lights in Calgary? After years of shadow casting in our front bedrooms due to the perpetual gleam of our local streetlight, we are thrilled to have sleepable darkness at last. The secret of these new bulbs is that they have a flat-bottomed lens that directs light downward, reducing sky glow. Calgary claims to be the first city in North America to extensively retrofit its residential streetlights. Well done, Calgary, for using lower wattage bulbs that save energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save money.

Sky glow is one of the four main effects of light pollution, along with light trespass, glare and energy waste. The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC) has put together a great summary of the effects of these four light-pollution aspects, and the city has taken these to heart with their retrofitting program. Sky glow results from poor fixtures and aim, allowing light to be directed where it serves no purpose. Glare is that uncomfortable brightness of a light source in your eyes, which actually reduces

visibility. Light trespass occurs when someone else's light shines on your property and in your windows, thus interfering with the enjoyment of your property. Energy waste hardly needs explanation.

RASC is also heading up a Light Pollution Abatement Program (LPAP) "to reduce the levels of light pollution in

urban and rural areas by advising federal, provincial and municipal governments and departments, business and concerned citizens on Light Pollution Abatement (LPA)." Check out [www.rasc.ca](http://www.rasc.ca) and click on "Education" for lots of great links, contacts and ideas for addressing your light-pollution concerns.



What can you do about your own production of light pollution, thereby reducing your eco-footprint? Change to lower wattage bulbs and choose low-pressure sodium lamps for outdoor lighting. Change or adapt your fixtures, using shielded lights with good reflectors. Direct all light downward, below 20 degrees from horizontal. Don't overlight. Dawn to dusk lighting, in many instances, can be an unnecessary waste of energy. Use motion sensors to draw attention to intruders (same philosophy as a car alarm) and use timers, especially as we approach the special season of holiday lighting.

Responsible lighting not only improves safety and security, reduces energy use and CO2 pollution and costs less, it also creates a much more attractive community. You might even get a great view of November's various meteor peaks on the 13th, 18th and 19th, though the latter will be competing with a full moon and a penumbral lunar eclipse. Turn down the lights as the sky lights up, and enjoy happy, healthy snoozing in your winter dens – no electricity required!

Environmentally yours,

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