Reset Your Circadian Clock by Going Camping

The expression “to go to bed with the chickens” refers to a time when people's sleep wake cycle was dictated by the natural day. In modern society this is no longer the case. We often stay up long after dusk, since we don't have to rely on natural light to do our work. As a consequence our biological night, as defined by elevated levels of the sleep hormone melatonin, begins long after dark. Therefore, when it is time to rise in the morning melatonin levels may still be high, making getting out of bed a challenge. The team of Prof. Kenneth Wright from the University of Colorado, Boulder, reports that camping might help. Their unique study, published in the journal Current Biology and featured in this Los Angeles Times article, shows that a weekend camping trip in the Rocky Mountains, away from electric lighting, was sufficient to shift the melatonin profile of campers more than an hour earlier compared with the control group that stayed home. Additionally, the researchers showed that the melatonin profiles mirror seasonal changes in day length. Therefore, maximizing light exposure during the day as well as minimizing it during the night is key to changing sleep patterns.

LA Times article:

Original article:
http://www.cell.com/current-biology/fulltext/S0960-9822(16)31522-6