

‘Double sleeping’: Did the industrial revolution end humans’ proclivity to sleep in two shifts?

In the 17th Century, a night of sleep went [something like this](#).

From as early as 21:00 to 23:00, those fortunate enough to afford them would begin flopping onto mattresses stuffed with straw or rags.

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A couple of hours later, people would begin rousing from this initial slumber. The night-time wakefulness usually lasted from around 11:00 to about 01:00, depending on what time they went to bed.

The period of wakefulness that followed was known as “the watch” – and it was a surprisingly useful window in which to get things done.

...

Once people had been awake for a couple of hours, they’d usually head back to bed. This next step was considered a “morning” sleep and might last until dawn, or later.

...

Even if artificial lighting was not fully to blame, by the end of the 20th Century, the division between the two sleeps had completely disappeared – the Industrial Revolution hadn’t just changed our technology, but our biology, too.

One major side-effect of much of humanity’s shift in sleeping habits has been a change in attitudes. For one thing, we quickly began shaming [those who oversleep](#), and developed a preoccupation with the link between waking up early and being productive.

[This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.](#)