

**Duff's Clock Repair**  
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**Generic Notes on Good Clock Care**

**Winding Your Spring Driven Clock:** Always wind slowly and don't wind until it is plumb tight. Wind slowly and then stop when it is fairly tight. You will note some slight backward movement after each forward wind. This is to allow the "click" to fall back into a notch in the ratchet. Control this slight backward movement so it is not a sudden jump.

Some clocks have one or two winding pegs and Westminster's have three. These pegs wind the time and chime mechanisms and which winds which varies from clock to clock. All pegs must be wound for the clock to function. Depending on the manufacturer, some wind clockwise and some counterclockwise.

**Winding Your Weight Driven Clock:** When winding a weight clock with chains pull steadily on the chain with one hand while lifting slightly on the corresponding weight to help it along. Its best to hang onto the weight at the hook just above the weight so you don't accidentally unhook the weight.

On a clock with a crank and cords wind them slowly and never wind up the cords with the weights removed. Do Not wind the weights all the way up. You should be able to see the tops of the pulleys holding the weights when properly wound.

On cuckoo clocks, do not pull the weights up until they hit the bottom of the clock. They should be left 2 to 3 inches below the bottom of the clock. If it is an eight-day cuckoo with the large heavy weights pull steadily on the chain with one hand while lifting slightly on the corresponding weight to help it along. Its best to hang onto the weight at the hook just above the weight so you don't accidentally unhook the weight.

On one day cuckoo clocks with the small weights it's not necessary to help the weight along. Just pull the weights up slowly with the chain.

**Moving Your Clock:** **Never move your clock with the pendulum and/or weights attached.** Simply remove them and re-hang them once the clock is in position. Note which weight was hanging on the center, right and left chains or cords and rehang them in the same order.

**To Set the Time:** **Never** move the minute hand backwards, even if the directions say its permissible. Move the minute hand clockwise slowly, pausing at the quarter (Westminster) or half hour positions and let the clock complete the appropriate strike before proceeding to the next strike. On most older clocks, at about 5 minute before the hour, you will hear a slight "zip" sound as the hour strike arms itself. Pause here just a moment before slowly proceeding to the

top of the hour to let the clock complete the hour strike.

The hour hand on a cuckoo clock is a simple snug fit onto the center brass pipe. Sometimes this hand gets bumped when setting the time making it loose on the pipe. If this happens slowly move the minute hand to 12 and count the number of cuckoos. Then point the hour hand to that number and **very gently** press the hand back on the pipe for a snug fit.

**Standard and Daylight Savings:** In the spring when we “Spring Ahead” simply move the hands forward one hour pausing as described above. In the fall when we “Fall Back” simply stop the pendulum for one hour and then restart your clock. **DO NOT** move the hands backwards!

**Setting the Strike:** Sometimes on older clocks as they wind down the time is set right by the hands but the strike count is off. The short, or hour hand, is a simple slip fit onto a brass stem and can be moved slowly frontwards or backwards. To reset the strike, move the long minute hand slowly up to the top of the hour and count the number of strikes. Then slowly move the short hour hand to point towards this number of strikes. Then, if necessary, re-set the time as described above. Newer clocks, and most all Westminster and grandfather clocks, are self-compensating clocks where they will automatically re-set themselves after running for about an hour and a half, but should the hour hand get accidentally moved, re-set it the same as described above.

**Regulating the Time:** All pendulum clocks, whether spring or weight drive, are regulated in the same fashion. Move the bob **UP** to speed the clock up and **DOWN** to slow the clock down. Making adjustments in small steps is much preferred over large, overcompensating adjustments. Brass mechanisms are temperature sensitive, so some “tweaking” may be needed as the seasons change, particularly if mounted on an outside wall. If you need to move the bob down on a cuckoo clock it's best to remove the pendulum to do this rather than simply pulling down on the bob as this can loosen the pendulum hanger inside the clock.

On some antique clocks you will see a much smaller peg, usually at the top or middle of the dial with a “F” or “S” beside it. If you rotate the small peg towards the “F” it makes the clock run faster and towards the “S” makes the clock run slower. Adjusting this takes the small end of a double ended clock key.

**Setting the Hand on a Calendar Clock:** Older calendar clocks have a long red hand that points to the day of the month. The clock movement advances this hand once a day with a small pin and gear arrangement. The calendar hand can be advanced forward to coincide with the proper date by simply moving it clockwise one click at a time. If it **DOES NOT** move don't force it. Wait a few hours until the pin and gear disengage and then the hand will move forward easily. On months with less than 31 days you will have to advance the hand at the end of the month.

**Setting the Alarm on a Kitchen Clock:** The small brass dial in the middle is used to set the number of hours before the small alarm bell will strike. Turn the dial until the desired number of hours is at the 12 position (straight up) and then wind the small alarm mechanism. When the number of hours has passed the alarm will go off. You can turn the alarm off by advancing the small dial clockwise until the clanging stops. This was used to time cooking events in the “kitchen”.

**Setting the Moon Dial on Grandfather Clocks:** The moon dial is advanced by a peg and gear arrangement in the dial. You can remove a side door, the left side usually works best, and with your finger slowly click the moon wheel until the desired phase is show on the front of the dial. If it DOES NOT move freely do not force it because the peg and gear are engaged. Simple wait a few hours and retry.

**Proper Care:** Modern synthetic clock oils last for years. If the simple rules described above are followed and some TLC practiced, your clock should run for several years. Have your clock serviced when it stops running or runs so slowly it never catches up or the chimes are slow or not working. There are no rules about how often to service a clock.

**Clock Placement:** Always set or hang your clock in a safe place, not right next to a door for example. **Set your clock level!** Pendulum clocks simple won't run correctly if not level. Set the level on top of the clock or on the mantel to see if it is flat. On wall clocks, including cuckoos, place the level on the side of the clock and set plumb.

**Going on Vacation:** It is best not to let your clock run completely down, especially spring driven clocks, as this may cause the time and chime to get out of sequence. Instead, simply stop the pendulum and when you return start the clock back up when the current time matches the time indicated by the hands on your clock.

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