

Study: Moving Backward Alters Our Perception of Time

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The Atlantic:

When college students were asked to look one month either into the past or the future, they perceived the future as closer (“a really short time from now”), while feeling more “psychologically distant” from the past. Commuters at a Boston train center, when asked to do the same (for 12 months’ time), felt much closer to the future. A third group, Internet users anticipating Valentine’s Day a week in advance, thought the holiday was quickly approaching; a week after the event, others thought it had been over for quite awhile, now.

Researchers led by Eugene Caruso of the University of Chicago established this phenomenon, which they call the “temporal Doppler effect,” through the above-mentioned studies. The next logical question — for those of us who already regretting something that’s ended or who are dreading an upcoming event — is whether we can make it stop. The researchers repeated their earlier studies, asking 80 college students to think about events either three weeks in the future or three weeks in the past. But this time, they created the illusion of traveling through space, via a head-mounted virtual reality system.

Read the whole story: [*The Atlantic*](#)