

Estimate the time difference between actual time and that of a pendulum clock which has been kept at a temperature ΔK higher than its calibration temperature, where its period was $P = 1s$, after 1 year:

The period of a pendulum is

$$P = 2\pi \sqrt{\frac{L}{g}}$$

where L is length and g is gravitational acceleration. This can be got on dimensional grounds up to a factor of 2π . Length varies with temperature

$$L = L_0(1 + \alpha\Delta T)$$

where L_0 is the length at $\Delta T = 0$ and α is the thermal expansivity. I know $\alpha = 16.5 \times 10^{-6} K$ for copper, so I will use this as an estimate. We have

$$P(T) = 2\pi \sqrt{\frac{L_0(1 + \alpha\Delta T)}{g}}$$

with $P_0 = 1s$.

Let n be the number of oscillations of the pendulum, and Y be the number of seconds in a year. The time difference is just the difference in the number of oscillations (since the period should be 1s).

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta T &= \Delta n \\ &= \frac{Y}{P_0} - \frac{Y}{P(T)} \\ &= \frac{Y}{P_0} \left(\frac{P - P_0}{P} \right) \\ &= Y \left(1 - \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 + \alpha\Delta T}} \right) \end{aligned}$$

Since $\alpha\Delta T$ is small we can binomially expand

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta\tau &= Y \left[1 - \left(1 + \frac{\alpha\Delta T}{2} \right) \right] \\ &\approx -\frac{\alpha\Delta T Y}{2}\end{aligned}$$

The minus sign indicates the pendulum clock is slow, but we only really care about the magnitude here. Inserting values using $Y = \pi \times 10^7$

$$\begin{aligned}|\Delta\tau| &\approx \frac{16.5 \times 10^{-6} \times 6 \times \pi \times 10^7}{2} \\ &\approx \frac{100 \times \pi \times 10}{2} \\ &\approx \underline{1.57 \times 10^3 \text{ s}}\end{aligned}$$

Note that we never needed the α we couldn't get from dimensional analysis.

[Exact: $|\Delta\tau| = 1562.5$ assuming copper]