

How to extend your smartphone's battery life

Written by

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No matter what type of smartphone you have, the device can serve as your MP3 player, digital camera, gaming system, and even your TV while you're out and about — as long as you have battery power. If it seems like smarter phones are getting less life out of their batteries... you're absolutely right. Smartphones can help you get a lot done while traveling, but if you're doing a lot on one in a day, you're apt to see your screen go dark long before the sun goes down.

Watching out for a few small things during your day, however, can help extend battery life on your trusty device and make sure you've got enough juice to make it all day and well into the night.

Mixed Signals

It takes extra juice for your smartphone to search for a data connection. If you're somewhere where you won't get a signal, like an airplane or subway, putting your phone in airplane mode or turning it off altogether will prevent it from draining your battery. Turning your phone on does require a bit of extra power, so it's best to save shutting it off for times when you plan to leave it off for a while, rather than something like a 20-minute subway ride to work in the morning. Thinking of it as car mode or subway mode instead of airplane mode might just be the mental trick you need!

Likewise, turn off wifi when you don't need it. When it's active, your phone scans for available wifi connections constantly, which kills battery life. If you're using the wifi in a coffee shop or bookstore, remember to disable that connection when you're done to avoid draining your battery

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while you're on the road.

Focus On The Task At Hand

Sure, you can have your email open, search for directions to a local restaurant, watch a video on YouTube, and play Angry Birds at the same time — but chances are you're really only focused on one of those tasks. Everything you have open on your phone is using some amount of battery power. Try to focus on doing just one thing at a time on your phone, and close unnecessary applications to keep them from draining your battery.

Things like your GPS and the bluetooth connection you use to connect to your hands-free device in the car gobble up a ton of battery power and are of no use to you unless you're doing a few specific tasks.

Bright Future

Bright screens look great but are a huge drain on your phone's battery. To stretch your phone's life, go into the controls or settings and dim the backlight or brightness of your screen. While the dimmest setting might be difficult to read (especially if you're somewhere brightly lit), something toward the middle will extend your battery life without putting too much strain on your eyes. If your phone has an auto-brightness option, using that can be a one-step solution to balancing battery life and ease of reading.

Along those same lines, try to avoid using animated backgrounds on your phone. Remember, the less you ask of your phone, the less it draws on your battery.

Bad Vibrations

It takes more battery power for your phone to vibrate than it does to ring. While you absolutely want to have your phone on vibrate (or turned off) when you're at a movie or in a meeting,

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keeping your ringer on at other times can help extend battery life.

Mandatory Nap Time

Just as you would with a toddler, the easiest way to make sure your smartphone's battery lasts all night is to give it a nap at some point during the day. If you're headed into a meeting for a few hours, turn off your phone and leave it in your desk. Likewise, if you're out to dinner with close friends or on a date, turn off your phone and focus on your companions. Not only will you look like a better employee and friend for focusing on the people around you in real life, you'll also save that much more juice for later.

Still having trouble?

If you still find yourself running out of battery life before the end of the day, plug into a charging bag or use an external battery pack such as Morphie's JuicePack to strap on some extra power for the road.{jcomments on}