

# Kindle Power Management

Kindles already have pretty good battery life, but what can you do to make it even better?

Because Kindles are based on E Ink technology, they use hardly any power. Unlike tablets, which are backlit, the only time they really need power is when something changes on the screen – page turns being the main reason for this.

Of course, there are often other things going on in the background, so Kindles also have a low-power state they go into if left idle for a certain amount of time. This can also be reached by sliding or pressing the power switch or button. The sleep mode is different to actually turning it off, because it will still draw some power from the battery, albeit a very low amount. However, if you switch it off completely, it won't be able to complete background tasks, such as indexing and so on, until you turn it back on again. You'll also have to wait longer for it to be ready to read.

Clearly, then, the sleep mode is ideal for saving your battery life, and the best thing about it is that you don't have to do anything to activate it other than to stop reading. You'll notice there's a screensaver, but unlike the one used for old-style CRT monitors, it's not there to protect the screen. All it does is let you know the Kindle is asleep.

## Wireless

As good as sleep mode is, the life of your battery will be reduced quite dramatically if you leave the wireless communications on. It differs from model to model, but the Kindle Keyboard, for example, when left asleep, has a battery life of around ten days with wireless on. Turn it off and it will last you a whole two months. If you're not browsing the store, the web or using Wikipedia, it makes sense to turn it off, which you can do quite easily from the menu options.

Another thing that can affect battery life is the screen refresh setting. On the latest Kindles (fourth generation and Touch), you can choose whether the screen refreshes after every page turn. If it's turned off, only the text will be updated and a full-screen refresh will only happen after every five pages. This also makes the page turns quicker, but it does result in some ghosting, where remnants of the previous page are faintly visible. However, it's barely noticeable.

## Charging

With most battery-powered gadgets, there's some kind of ideal battery-charging procedure. Sometimes this involves letting the battery run down to a certain point before

recharging it again; sometimes it involves not letting it charge to 100%; and there are other methods as well. With the Kindle, though, this doesn't seem to be a necessary consideration, because it uses such a small amount of power anyway. That said, it's probably best not to leave the battery flat for a long period of time, because that could be detrimental to its ability to hold a charge.

Assuming you've turned off the wireless, then, your battery life should really be fine for most uses. However, if you're not going to be able to charge your Kindle for several weeks or if you really need to use the wireless connections, then you might want to consider getting yourself an external battery, which you can get from a variety of manufacturers.

Of course, that itself will need charging, and if that's a problem you might want to consider going solar. The SolarKindle ([www.solarmio.com](http://www.solarmio.com)) is a case that comes with a solar panel on the front. This uses sunlight to charge a built-in battery, which powers both the built-in lamp and the Kindle itself, extending your reading time. If you're somewhere sunny, you might never need to plug your Kindle in again. It's worth pointing out, though, at £79.99, it costs nearly as much as the Kindle itself.

Another sun-powered option is the Switch Solar Bag, a rucksack with a built-in solar panel and battery, which can be used to charge a multitude of devices, including Kindles, of course. You can get it from [www.ecoark.co.uk](http://www.ecoark.co.uk), along with stand-alone solar panels that can clip onto ordinary bags. Just brace yourself for the price first: it costs an eye-watering £148.

## Battery

A final thing worth considering is replacement batteries, which might be necessary for an older Kindle. None of the current Kindles have user-replaceable batteries, though, and although you can buy easily buy a battery online, changing it will involve cracking open the Kindle, voiding your warranty and risking breaking it. If it's already out of warranty, of course, you might consider this worth the risk.

Nevertheless, for most people, none of these things will be necessary. Only wireless options really affect the battery life and, as E Ink and battery technology improve, even that will probably become unimportant. So you can just relax with your favourite books without worrying about the battery. Indeed, that's just how every reading experience should be.

**K-fact – TXXXXXXXXXT**  
It doesn't come as standard, but Amazon sells a standalone mains power adapter for the Kindle. It might be worth investing in one, just in case!

