



Conserving battery power

Ever run out of battery power in the middle of an important meeting or a long flight? Even with advances in technology, your laptop battery can last only so long on a single charge. The trick is to squeeze the most out of the power that's available.

Chances are, you already have ways to make sure your laptop always has power. Maybe you carry an extra battery, or your power cord, so you can recharge your laptop when a power plug is handy. (Always consult your manufacturer's instructions for the best way to recharge your battery.)

When those strategies fail, here are some other ways to help stretch your computer's battery life.

If you have time to do only one thing...

Use the Power saver power plan to maximize your battery life. You can always return to this article later to try more power-saving tips. To choose the Power saver plan, open Power Options in Control Panel.

Choose a power plan that saves power

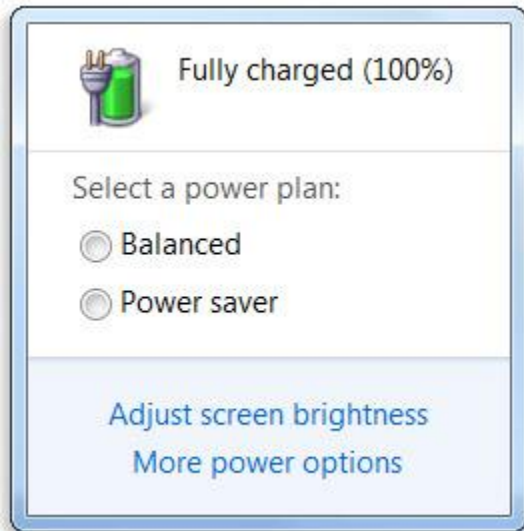
A power plan is a collection of hardware and system settings that control how your laptop manages power. Windows 7 has two default plans:

- **Balanced.** Offers full performance and display brightness when you need it, but conserves power when the computer is idle.
- **Power saver.** The best choice for extending battery life. The cost? Slower performance and lower display brightness.

Your computer manufacturer might offer additional plans.

To change your power plan

1. Click the battery meter icon in the notification area of the Windows taskbar.



Battery meter showing power plans

2. Select one of the default power plans: **Balanced** or **Power saver**.

You can also create your own custom power saver plans.


Reduce display brightness

The display can use more power than any other part of a computer—even more than a hard disk and CPU. Some laptops have a dedicated button or dial to change the display brightness. To find out if your laptop has something like this, check the information that came with your computer or go to the manufacturer's website. You can also adjust the display brightness from Power Options in Control Panel.

Shorten the length of time before Windows dims and turns off the display

When you're not using the laptop—even for brief periods of time—you can save power by having Windows dim and then turn off the display after a period of inactivity.

To choose when Windows dims and turns off the display

1. Open Power Options by clicking the **Start** button , clicking **Control Panel**, clicking **System and Security**, and then clicking **Power Options**.
2. On the **Select a power plan** page, on the left, click **Choose when to turn off the display**.

Note

Doing this adjusts settings only for the plan that you're currently using. To change settings for another plan, click **Change plan settings** next to the plan that you want to change.



3. On the **Change settings for the plan** page, choose the display settings that you want to use for this power plan when your laptop is running on battery and when it's plugged in.
4. Click **Save changes**.

Turn off or remove devices that you aren't using

Many USB devices use power just by being connected. If you use a USB mouse, you can save power by disconnecting the mouse and by using a touch pad or tablet pen. If you use a USB flash drive, unplug it when you're not using it.

Turn off PC cards and integrated wireless devices

These devices also use power. If you don't need them, turn them off.