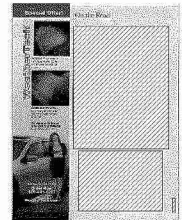


GEAR

Unplugged? Find your power in nature

Going off the grid doesn't have to mean doing without your cell phone or mini-music player. On the trail or by the pool, you can now turn to the sun, the wind, or your own muscles to stay connected miles from a plug. These **portable chargers** use clean energy but take time—from 10 minutes to 15 hours—to juice up. Luckily, most of the chargers store power so you can load them at leisure and charge any time. Here are our top picks.

- Let the wind spin the blades of the palm-size 4.3-ounce **HYmini** (below, center) to convert nine to 40 mph gusts into longer battery life. Add a HY mini solar panel, bike holder, armband, or crank generator. \$50. bymini.com.
- The 24-ounce **Joos Orange** is about two-thirds the size of an iPad and can store enough solar input to replenish four smartphones. A hardy outdoor companion, the Orange can also take a tumble or a surprise rain shower. \$100. (408) 369-1727, solarjoos.com.
- Sleek enough to slip into your pocket, the 2.1-ounce **JuiceBar** (below, right), powered by sunlight, can squeeze out enough energy for 15 hours of MP3 music or two charges of a cell phone. \$43. (866) 222-0030, cableorganizer.com.
- Part stylish iPhone or iPod Touch case, the 2.7-ounce solar **Surge** trickles current into your device even while it's pressed to your ear or syncing your media. \$80 for iPhone, \$70 for iPod Touch. (510) 957-0148, novothink.com.
- The world's first solar charger for handhelds, the **Solio Classic** fans out like a windmill. Three small panels, weighing 5.6 ounces total, turn an hour of sunbeams into a 20-minute phone call. \$80. (510) 868-8714, solio.com.
- It's all in the wrists to crank light or an urgent call out of the 3.3-ounce **SOSCharger** (below, left). Spin the two-inch handle for three minutes to get an hour of bright light or up to eight minutes of talk time. \$25. (800) 761-4505, soscharger.com. — SERENA RENNER





KEVIN CANDLAND