



Solar chargers for rechargeable batteries

If you're a bit of an electronics whiz, you can use small, low voltage solar panels such as the [Powerfilm SP3-37](#) to charge rechargeable AA/AAA and other size batteries. On the other hand, you could just use an off-the-shelf solar charger. In our range of solar battery chargers, the solar panels are integrated with a battery holder and appropriate circuitry, so all you have to do is pop in the batteries and leave the charger in the sun. Most of our chargers are for AA or AAA batteries, but the [Multicharger](#) will also take C and D sizes.

How long will it take to charge my batteries?

- The amount of sunlight falling onto a solar charger is crucial to its performance. The more sunlight, the more power you get.
- Up to a point, the more powerful the solar panel, the faster the batteries will charge. The [Violetta](#) and [Powerfilm](#) solar chargers are the fastest to charge, taking around 4 -6 hours.
- The speed at which your batteries recharge will also depend on their capacity in mAh. This is written on the side of the battery. Modern batteries are generally large – a camera battery will be around 2600 mAh. The higher the capacity the longer a battery will take to recharge.
- Another factor will be the state of charge of the battery. If the battery has gone completely flat, it will of course take longer to charge.

A few simple rules will help you get the most out of your solar charger:

- Charge new batteries before first use; if they are high capacity, charge them from mains once before you charge them from solar.
- Try to run the battery right down and then recharge it on a regular basis (monthly for NiCads, every 3 months for NiMH).
- Batteries, especially NiMH, lose their charge during storage - recharge them regularly.
- Don't let the battery get too hot during charge or storage; if it feels hot during charging, stop.
- Remove batteries from the charger once they are fully charged, especially in bright conditions.
- When charging pairs of batteries, make sure they are of the same type and state of charge.

Rechargeable AA/AAA batteries commonly come in two types - NiCad and NiMH. NiMH are more environmentally friendly and tend to be higher capacity than NiCad. They are better suited to fast charging - use the [Violetta](#) or the [Powerfilm](#) folding panel. NiCads contain environmentally toxic Cadmium, but are more robust and last longer than NiMH. For more detailed information click [here](#). Please be responsible. Your batteries contain chemicals that are harmful to the environment. Dispose of them properly - don't put batteries in your household waste.

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