

Smart Power Strips

Prevent Phantom Power



Smart power strips are designed to sense usage and automatically shut off electricity, saving up to \$84 a year in energy costs.

What is Phantom Power?

Phantom power is electricity drawn by appliances and electronic devices that are idle or turned off. When electronics are plugged in they will draw phantom power even if turned off. Phantom power accounts for about 20% of the energy that electronics use. Most phantom power goes unnoticed, but the costs incurred from phantom power can add up quickly. The average American owns roughly 21 consumer electric devices. That's a lot of potential phantom power!

What Are Smart Strips?

Smart strips are energy efficient intelligent surge protectors. Smart strips are designed to “sense” usage and automatically shut off electricity to the outlets holding devices that are not in use. These surge protectors can save up to \$84 a year in energy costs. Along with energy saving outlets, smart strips also include a few outlets with a continuous flow of electricity for devices that must always have electricity, such as internet routers/modems, motion lights and alarm clocks. Smart strips are available at discount, office supply and hardware stores.

Tips for Using Smart Strips:

- Use smart strips on lamps, chargers, computer monitors, televisions, cable boxes and stereo systems.
- Store smart strips indoors when not in use.
- Make sure the smart strip preset power threshold is sensitive enough for the electronics being used.
- Plug DVRs into an “always on” outlet in the smart strip.
- Do not use smart strips on wired smoke detectors, thermostats, alarm systems, stove clocks, washers, dryers or motion lights.
- Do not use smart strips outdoors, near water or in wet conditions.



Use a smart strip for internet routers/modems, game systems, and chargers.



Put items on standby mode to prevent phantom power.



The above image illustrates devices that usually draw phantom power.



How to Choose a Smart Strip

Choosing a smart strip depends on what you're plugging into it. There are four main types of smart strips.

1. **Regular smart strips** that manage the outlets based solely on the amount of energy flowing through each individual outlet.
2. Smart strips **with a control outlet**, which will shut off power to all other monitored outlets when the device plugged into it is shut off.
3. Smart strips **with a motion sensor** that will shut off electricity to the entire strip when it detects that no one has been in the area for a designated period of time.
4. Smart strips that **have a timer built into them** that will turn the electricity on and off at preset times.

Other Ways to Avoid Phantom Power

- Unplug electronics when they are not in use, especially chargers when electronics are fully charged. Electronics continue to draw power when nothing is connected to them and draw even more power when the device is fully charged, but still connected.
- Turn electronics completely off when not in immediate use. Putting them on standby mode still uses power so that they are ready to respond when reactivated.
- Set computers and game consoles to sleep or standby when they have not been used for a few minutes. The sleep or standby mode uses less energy than leaving them paused.
- Prior to vacation, unplug electronics and small devices (i.e. TVs, phone or video game chargers, computers and printers).
- Purchase ENERGY STAR® qualified electronics. These electronics have lower standby consumption and prevent 25-75% of the phantom power produced by regular electronics.
- Use a wattmeter to discover how much power electronics require to function and determine whether there are more energy efficient options. Wattmeters are available to borrow from the Herrick District Library. You can check out a Home Energy Monitoring Kit from the Library of Things!

Fast Facts

- 1 Smart strips are energy efficient intelligent surge protectors designed to sense usage and automatically shut off electricity to outlets holding the devices.
- 2 Phantom power accounts for 20% of the energy used by electronics, and smart strips can help prevent phantom power.
- 3 Smart strips can help you save up to \$84 a year without any hassle!



To avoid phantom power, look for ENERGY STAR qualified electronics.



Choosing the right smart strip depends on what is being plugged into it.