

## Summary

The article describes the benefits of unplugging chargers when not in use. Unplugging chargers reduces energy consumption, saves money on electricity bills, and decreases the risk of fires and damage to devices. Additionally, the article suggests creating a charging station, choosing energy-efficient chargers, and educating others about the importance of unplugging chargers.

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Chargers are essential for everyday devices—but is it safe to leave them plugged in when not in use? Discover what an expert says about energy use and safety.

By [Timothy Dale](#) Published on August 12, 2025



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## Key Takeaways

- Idle chargers consume energy even when not in use, resulting in higher bills and wasted power over time.
- Leaving chargers plugged in increases fire risks and shortens charger lifespan due to overheating and voltage exposure.
- Simple habits and tools can help automate the simple practice of unplugging your chargers.

In the average household, a wide variety of wireless devices require chargers, including phones, tablets, laptops, headphones, keyboards, speakers, and other electronic devices. Depending on the device and your usage habits, it might require daily charging, which means plugging in and unplugging both the charger and the device frequently.

However, many individuals leave the charger plugged in even when they aren't charging anything. While this might seem like a harmless decision, it can have lasting consequences. Use this guide to determine whether you should [unplug chargers when not in use](#) or if it's okay to leave them plugged in.

## Should You Unplug Your Chargers When Not in Use?

Forgetting to [unplug a charger](#) once or twice isn't likely to cause any noticeable differences. However, make a habit of constantly leaving every charger you use plugged into various outlets throughout the home. It can lead to significant consequences for your home, devices, chargers, and wallet.

"I always recommend unplugging chargers when you're not actively using them. Even if a charger isn't connected to a phone or device, it still draws a small amount of electricity just by being plugged into the wall. It might not seem like much on its own, but if you multiply that across every charger and electronic device in your home, it adds up over time," explains Barret Abramow, licensed electrician and founder of [Grounded Electric](#).

Not only does unplugging a charger help to [reduce your electric bill](#) and prevent unnecessary spending, but it can also reduce the [risk of fire](#), shorts, and other damage to your home and electronic devices. "Leaving chargers plugged in can pose a fire risk, especially if the wiring inside the charger is low quality or becomes damaged over time. I've seen outlets scorched or short-circuited by cheap third-party chargers that overheat. Even high-quality chargers can overheat in certain conditions, so unplugging them when not in use is just good common sense," states Abramow.

### What to Know About Vampire Energy

The concept of [vampire energy](#), also known as phantom load, is often discussed in relation to electronic devices, but merely hearing the term doesn't provide a suitable explanation for what is actually happening.

"Vampire energy (also called phantom load) refers to the electricity that devices consume even when they're turned off or in standby mode. Idle chargers are a classic example—they constantly sip power just by being plugged in," Abramow says. "A single charger might draw only 0.1 to 0.5 watts, but across a year, and especially in households with many devices, it can add up to wasted energy and money."

### Other Benefits to Unplugging a Charger

Ultimately, leaving a charger plugged in has only one benefit: you don't need to plug it in again when you need to use it. However, there are several benefits to unplugging your charger, including energy savings, cost savings, fire prevention, and even improved device longevity.

"You do save energy—even if it's just a small amount per device, it's cumulative. Plus, unplugging helps prolong the life of your chargers," Abramow says. "Constant exposure to power, especially in homes with voltage fluctuations, can slowly degrade the internal components of your charger. It's a simple habit that saves electricity, reduces fire risk, and helps your electronics last longer."

## Tips to Simplify the Habit of Unplugging Chargers

Despite knowing that it is better to unplug their chargers, many individuals continue to leave them plugged in simply out of habit. To counteract this inclination, it's essential to find ways to create new habits, which often starts by simplifying the habit you are trying to build.

- **Create a charging station.** Find a spot to keep the bulk of your chargers, so you only need to remember to unplug one; this way, you'll remember to unplug all of them.
- **Choose energy-efficient chargers and devices.** This will minimize passive energy consumption in case you forget to unplug the charger.
- **Educate other members of the household.** This way, you won't constantly have to unplug chargers while everyone else continues to plug them in and leave them there.
- **Group chargers with power strips.** Plug multiple chargers into a single power strip that can be turned off when you are done charging the devices or when you leave the area.
- **Make unplugging chargers a part of your daily routine.** When you go through the usual steps to go to work or go to bed, include unplugging the chargers as a necessary part of the process.
- **Invest in smart plugs, smart power strips, or timers.** These items can be programmed to turn off or set to operate for specific time intervals before automatically shutting off. This will help ensure that even if you forget to unplug the chargers, they will not be drawing electricity while not in use.