



# technology

Outlet, schmoutlet:  
With his portable  
chargers, Randy  
Markey is never  
up against the wall.



## MOBILITY READY, SET, CHARGE!

TIPS, TRICKS AND GREEN GADGETS FOR JUICING UP YOUR MOBILE TECHNOLOGY BY HEATHER CLANCY

**W**hen it comes to charging his mobile technology on the run, entrepreneur Randy Markey plugs in whenever possible. He has even bargained with New York City cab drivers for a quick power boost while speeding across Manhattan.

"The biggest issue is my BlackBerry," says Markey, co-founder of Cleveland-based management consulting firm Capital Acceleration Partners, which generates more than \$5 million in

sales each year. "So whenever I'm in an airline lounge, I make sure I'm fully charged before I leave. [Also], whenever I'm driving, I have a converter in my car that I can plug into the cigarette lighter that turns into a regular power outlet. It can handle two things."

Markey, 41, also swears by a new device from Ecosol Solar Technologies called the PowerStick, which he started using about four months ago. The gadget, which costs about \$70 and includes one device connector, charges off your computer's USB

Photo: John Bahlan/Getty Images



port and acts as a power booster for all manner of mobile electronics equipment, from PDAs to cell phones. Essentially, it acts as an external power supply. "When I'm nowhere near any kind of electricity, I can recharge," Markey says. "It has come in extremely handy."

The most obvious force inspiring portable power innovation is an explosion in the use of PDAs, mobile phones, MP3 players and the like. It's not uncommon to see travelers huddled around electrical outlets in airports or public transportation hubs—thus the rise of ChargeCarte kiosks, rapid-charging stations for cell phones and iPods that are popping up in various airports around the globe.

Winton Churchill, founder of Churchill Method Inc., a lead-generation services company in Brentwood, California, that generates around \$1 million in sales annually, was relieved to find one of these stations in Shanghai when his cell phone battery gave out. But rapid charging can take a toll on the battery life of your technologies. So Churchill, 56, practices two habits when he's on the road or flying: First, he carries an iGo charger, which comes with tips and adapters so it can be used with more than one gadget. Second, he picks his airplane seat on seatguru.com so he has a better chance of having access to a power jack he can use in flight.

Other examples of portable chargers include the Chargepod from Callpod, which starts at \$50 and lets you juice up to six

mobile gadgets off a single power cord. The 24-7 Power Pack from Medis Technologies is a disposable battery that costs about \$30 and can give you up to 30 hours more talk time on a mobile phone or 60 to 80 hours of play time on an MP3 player. GearJuice—Mobile Pocket Power from Iogear is a \$50 gadget that can juice up your cell phone three times before you need to recharge it.

If you spend a fair amount of time on planes, consider the Inflight Power Recharger, which uses the jack in your armrest meant for audio headphones to generate a source of USB power output that works with various iPods and mobile phones, including the iPhone. A kit with adapters for a BlackBerry costs about \$45.

If you're a Motorola Razr user, check out the new WildCharger pad from WildCharge, which costs \$34.99 to \$89.99. Once you replace the existing battery cover on the back of your phone, simply set the phone on top of the pad to recharge. The theory is that it can ultimately handle multiple devices. A company called Powermat boasts similar technology.

There are even solar chargers for those who lean green. One example is the Solio Hybrid 1000, a 4.6-ounce rechargeable booster battery that costs about \$80 and is charged by either sunlight or DC input. The company figures one hour of sunlight translates into 15 minutes of talk time or 40 minutes on an MP3 player.