

# THE GREAT HEADLAMP DEBATE

DISPOSABLE BATTERY VS RECHARGEABLE

Headlamps are an amazing and useful tool, for tasks and outdoor recreation, allowing the user to focus on what they're doing without having to use their hands to hold a flashlight. The technology in headlamps is always improving, and with that comes an increasing number of rechargeable options. Does that mean disposable battery operated headlamps are a thing of the past? Many users insist on their reliability, but that may be based solely on positive user user experience and the fact that for so long they were the only option available. Let's look into a comparison of the two, but before we do, be aware that there are options available that will allow you to recharge and add disposable batteries as a backup.



Courtesy of Hufftrax Adventures

## RECHARGEABLE SAVES MONEY

While the initial price tag on many rechargeables can be two to three times higher, you'll eventually spend that savings on disposable batteries. Somewhere in the middle is the rechargeable battery option, but again, these cost money. The Pretzel Tikkina is a popular economical option at \$20, but the rechargeable Petzel CORE battery costs an additional \$30, making this option priced similarly to rechargeable headlamps that offer a rechargeable lithium battery with a separate option for disposable if needed..

## Leave No Trace

Outdoor enthusiasts should be strong supporters of Leave No Trace Principles, and minimizing our environmental impact can extend beyond the trail. While no longer filled with toxic materials, alkaline batteries are often tossed into regular waste and end up in landfills. Reusable is more ecologically ideal.

## RELIABILITY AND CONFIDENCE

Rechargeables have a specific battery life, so you can plan in advance the amount of battery life you'll have, while disposables are an estimate. You can always bring extra batteries, but even the reliability of an alkaline battery is limited in cold weather. As with any electronic, you should pack a backup, and a backup power source, all of which should be insulated from the cold. You can always carry a backup power bank for your rechargeable headlamp and phone, which can charge your headlamp while you use your backup. Many power banks like the Anker are durable, fast charging, and lightweight.

## EASE AND PACK WEIGHT

Playing around with tiny batteries, especially in the cold, is not ideal. They can easily end up rolling around in your pack, and can be at risk of not working if they are exposed to colder temperatures. Carrying plenty of extra batteries is smart, but can accumulate weight in your pack as well. While the batteries aren't likely to weight more than a power bank, a power bank offers back up to other devices, so has an additional benefit.

There are a lot of quality options for both rechargeable and disposable battery powered headlamps, and good choices are available for each type. Look for a quality brand and consider all the tech specifics according to your needs. Most importantly, remember to ALWAYS bring an extra, and ALWAYS insulate headlamps, powerbanks, batteries, and other electronics from the cold while winter hiking. There are commercial electronic insulation products available, or keep in a thermal pouch with other insulating material.