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Hi-tech flashlights and lanterns for the homesteader

LED's offer more light for less power

BY DENNIS "BONES" EVERS
COLORADO

Being able to trade the hustle and bustle of the city for the peace and quiet of the country is, in my opinion, one of the greatest blessings one could ever enjoy. Rural life is great, but it does have its drawbacks. Getting away from it all means you leave many of the conveniences and services a big city has to offer behind, particularly the bright lights.

Rural life often requires doing chores or checking on things in the dark of night and perhaps the most overlooked, yet vitally important piece of equipment any homesteader can own is a good flashlight. From seeing if its raccoons or bears in the trash, to fixing a flat or crawling around under the house, a rugged, bright flashlight is essential.

Since Thomas Edison invented the incandescent light bulb over a century ago, we've used the same



The Remington light on left uses two CR123 batteries and really outshines the incandescent 5 "D" cell light on the right with new batteries. Notice how much whiter and brighter the LED light is compared to the regular light.



Constructed of aluminum, all of these high-quality flashlights are compact, feature high-powered LED's and are easy to carry around and stow. 1.Coleman's Multi Colored light has red, blue and white LED's. 2.Duracell "Daylite" features special optics and adjustable beam. 3.At Sam's Club, the Element K2 is rugged and inexpensive. 4.The Energizer Lithium has a variable dimmer and shuts off after 30 minutes. 5.The Gerber Cornea is a bigger light and has a spot/flood adjustment and disorienting strobe. 6.The LED Lenser P7 has a sliding spot/flood adjustment, high run times. 7. The Skinny RayO Vac sportsman has an adjustable flood/spot beam. 8.Remington's skinny light has high/low and strobe. Any one of these lights would be a great companion on a dark night. All of them are available on the web and many in local big box, hunting and hardware stores.

basic technology for flashlights with filament type bulbs. My monster incandescent flashlight from my old police days uses 5 "D" cells, and even with new batteries has an anemic light output, and a dismally short single digit run time. The small LED lenser P7 tactical flashlight has 10 times the brightness of my five cell light, and with just four standard "AAA" batteries will run over 100 hours. Incredible!

Make no mistake, LED's are amazing, they keep getting better and better and have no downside I



From left to right: The Coleman Family Lantern uses 8 "D" batteries and puts out 175 lumens. The Dorcy lantern has 160 lumens on 4 "D" cells. The LED Lenser runs off 4 "D" batteries and puts out 70 lumens on high. (I like the battery charge indicator below the power button.) While small in size, the RayOVac Xtreme puts out 300 lumens on 3 "D" batteries and has a blinking green led to locate it. The Remington Lantern uses 4 "D" batteries and puts out a whopping 350 lumens. All of these will light a room and take the edge off any power failure.

can think of. Another benefit of LED's is unlike regular incandescent bulbs, they put out a much whiter light, can be dropped and thoroughly abused and will still function. They also produce good light until the batteries run down and can last up to 100,000 hours. What's not to like?

Many LED flashlights even have dimmers to increase battery life and for times when you don't need full brightness and adjustable beams that go from spot to flood with a twist or slide.

While there are countless "high powered" LED flashlights on the market, I have always preferred the compact aluminum "tactical" style which usually has the switch on the butt end. They are extremely rugged, small enough to fit in your pocket, have tremendous light output and start at around \$15.

The higher the lumen or watt rating, the brighter the light. Conversely, the brighter the light, the shorter the run times, however, with run times in the double digits on readily available "AA" and "AAA" batteries (some use readily available 3 volt CR123 batteries), most of the LED lights are quite inexpensive to run.

Having some in the house and vehicles is probably the best investment you will ever make.

No more messy gas lanterns

At times when you require more light than a flashlight, the new generation of LED camping/emergency lights will work well to drive away the darkness.

If the lights do go out, the difference between a scary blackout and a tolerable evening playing cards or a board game is light. Investing in a battery operated LED lantern is a wise decision and the lantern can be used for other things, like chores and even camping.

While gas and kerosene lanterns are nostalgic, they require expensive fuel, are dangerous, and have fragile, expensive mantles. Efficient LED lanterns will run triple digits on a single set of batteries and will provide light immediately when needed. You can also store LED lanterns anywhere you want until it is needed for use—no worry about gas or fumes.

Your mpg may vary

Just like the old ads that used to say your mileage may vary, I'm always leery of battery run times because of the different battery brands and types, and the type of lab tests. While most of the manufacturers are very accurate in their run times, others might be a little too generous. Check the approximate run times be-



If you don't want or need a full size lantern, these LED lights are perfect. The light on the left is a Black and Decker Light Stick and really comes in handy for rough work. The second and third lanterns are Brunton and RayOVac small camp lanterns. The last two are Brunton and Remington flashlights which also convert to lanterns as well for basic area lighting.

fore you buy if you are concerned.

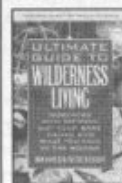
LED's are dramatically changing lighting in every area, and flashlights and lanterns are no exception. For those of us living in the rural areas, these bright, rugged, inexpensive, long life lights are a real year 'round plus.

Ultimate Guide To Wilderness Living

Surviving With Nothing But Your Bare Hands And What You Find In The Woods

"Highly recommended."—Les Stroud, AKA Survivorman

BY JOHN MCPHERSON AND GERRI MCPHERSON



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