BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

An Extended Guide · No. 1812

Extending Your Runtime

More minutes from your UPS — free tricks to bigger battery

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! Read this first — what a UPS can and can't do

First, the honest picture, so a UPS never disappoints you. A UPS — an uninterruptible power supply — is a battery backup box. When the power blinks or goes out, it keeps small electronics like your computer, your modem and router, or a medical monitor running without a flicker. But it is a short bridge, not a whole-home generator: it buys you minutes, not hours — time to save your work and shut down gently, keep the internet up through a brief blip, or ride you over until a generator or a portable power station takes over. Plug only small electronics into the battery side. Never plug in a laser printer, a space heater, a hair dryer, a microwave, a sump pump, or anything that makes heat or has a big motor — they draw far too much and can overload or damage the unit. A UPS has a sealed battery inside, so set it where a little warmth can escape, not sealed in a cabinet, and keep it dry. That battery wears out every few years and gets swapped and recycled at a battery drop-off — never put it in the household trash. Want more minutes out of your UPS? You have two levers — plug in less, or add more battery. This guide covers both, from free to bigger investments.

Getting more minutes out of your UPS

A UPS gives you minutes, and sometimes you want more of them. The good news is you have real options — some that cost nothing at all, and some that stretch a UPS toward hours by pairing it with a bigger battery.

I'm Bill, from Bill's Home Tech in Portage County, Ohio. 'Can I make it last longer?' is a question I hear a lot, especially from folks out in the country where outages drag on. The answer is yes — and it starts with things that don't cost a dime.

We'll go from the free tricks to the paid ones, and show how a UPS hands off to a power station or generator when you need to ride out a truly long outage.

★ Start with the free wins

Before you spend a penny, there are ways to add runtime for free. Let's start there, then look at the bigger steps. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 to talk it through.

The whole idea, on one page

If you read nothing else, here's how to add runtime.

- ❑ Two levers: plug in less (free) or add more battery (costs money).
- ❑ Free wins: move non-essentials off the battery, turn off the monitor.
- ❑ A dedicated UPS for just the internet gear lasts far longer on that light load.
- ❑ Add-on battery packs, if your UPS accepts them, add minutes at the same load.
- ❑ For hours or days, bridge to a power station or generator.
- ❑ A UPS is still a bridge — it won't run your house for days on its own.

> **✔ Trim first, then add**
> Lightening the load is free and instant. Do that before you spend on more battery, and you may find you already have enough.

The two levers: less load, more battery

Every way to add runtime pulls one of these two levers.

Runtime is a tug-of-war between how much you've plugged in and how big the battery is. So you can lengthen it two ways: reduce the load, so the battery drains slower, or increase the battery, so there's more to drain. The first is often free; the second costs money. Most folks get the runtime they want by pulling a little on both.

> **✔ Two levers, many combinations**
> You don't have to choose just one. Trim a little load and add a little battery, and the minutes add up faster than either alone.

Trim the load — the free win

The quickest runtime boost costs nothing.

- **Move the printer, chargers, and speakers** off the battery outlets to the surge side.
- **Unplug anything non-essential** from the battery during an outage.
- **Keep only the true must-haves** on the battery — computer and internet, say.
- **Skip the second monitor** and extra gadgets while you're on battery.

> **✔ Less on the battery, more time**
> Every watt you take off the battery side is a little more runtime for what remains. It's the cheapest upgrade there is.

Turn off the thirsty gear

A big monitor is often the thirstiest thing on your desk.

During an outage, a large, bright monitor can drain the battery faster than the computer itself. You don't need it lit the whole time — turn it off, or dim it, while you wait or work briefly, and switch it on only when you need to see. The same goes for any bright, power-hungry gadget. Resting the thirsty ones stretches the minutes noticeably.

> **✔ Dark screen, longer battery**
> If you're just keeping the internet up or waiting out a blink, turn the monitor off. The computer keeps working, and the battery lasts longer.

Give light gear its own UPS

Splitting the job can dramatically extend the part that matters most.

A UPS shared between a hungry desktop and your internet gear runs down at the pace of the hungry gear. Put the internet on its own little UPS instead, and that light load stretches for far longer — keeping you online long after the desktop's UPS would have quit. Separating jobs is one of the best runtime moves for staying connected.

> **★ Two small UPS units beat one shared one**
> For staying online, a dedicated internet UPS is a favorite trick of mine — long runtime on a light load, and it doesn't get dragged down by the computer.

Add-on battery packs

Some UPS units can grow their battery — a tidy way to add minutes.

Certain UPS models accept extra battery packs that plug in to add more stored energy at the same load — so your gear runs longer without changing anything else. If you think you'll want more runtime down the road, choosing a unit that takes these add-on packs leaves you room to grow. Not every UPS offers this, so look for it if it matters to you.

> **✔ Buy expandable if you might grow**
> A UPS that accepts extra battery packs is a smart buy if your runtime needs might increase — you add battery later instead of replacing the whole unit.

A bigger UPS, or a bigger battery

Sometimes the honest answer is simply more battery.

If you consistently want more runtime than trimming can give, a UPS with a larger built-in battery is the straightforward fix — more stored energy means more minutes at your load. It costs more and weighs more, but it's simple. Our sizing guide helps you match a larger unit to the runtime you're after.

> **✔ Right-size for your real goal**
> Decide how long you truly need — ride a blink, or stay online for a good while — and size the battery to that. Bigger isn't better if you don't need the minutes.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

How far you'll want to stretch runtime leans heavily on how long your outages last.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or the suburbs, short outages mean you rarely need more than the free tricks give you.

- Trimming the load is usually all you need for the frequent short blips.
- A dedicated internet UPS keeps you online well past a typical outage.
- Add-on battery packs are handy but seldom necessary in town.
- Save the bigger investments for gear that truly must ride out a longer outage.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country on a private well, long outages are common, so stretching runtime — and bridging to bigger backup — really matters.

- Combine the free trims with add-on battery packs for meaningfully longer runtime.
- Plan to recharge the UPS from a power station or generator so the essentials hold for hours.
- Keep the internet and phone on a lean, long-lasting UPS so you stay reachable.
- For a truly long rural outage, the UPS is the bridge and the generator is the workhorse.

> **★ Want more minutes from your setup?**
> Tell me your gear and how long you need, and I'll suggest the mix of free trims and battery add-ons that gets you there. Call (330) 200-8042.

Recharge from a power station or generator

The real secret to long runtime isn't a bigger UPS — it's a hand-off.

A UPS holds minutes; a power station or generator makes power for hours or days. Plug your UPS into a power station or a running generator, and the UPS's battery stays topped up — so it keeps protecting your gear for as long as the bigger source lasts. The UPS still does its instant catch; the bigger battery or generator carries the long haul behind it.

> **✔ The UPS never has to run down**
> If a power station or generator keeps the UPS charged, the UPS's own minutes barely matter — it's just the seamless bridge on top of a much bigger source.

A UPS plus a power station

A popular pairing that gives you the best of both.

Many portable power stations can power your gear for hours and some even offer a fast 'UPS-like' switchover of their own. A tidy setup is to let a proper UPS handle the instant, no-flicker catch for your sensitive gear, and let a power station sit behind it for the long hours — recharging the UPS or powering the desk directly. Our 'UPS vs power station' guide lays out how they team up.

> **★ Instant catch, long carry**
> The UPS is the goalkeeper for the first split second; the power station is the endurance runner for the hours after. Together they cover both ends.

Runtime and battery age

Before buying more battery, check the one you have.

If your runtime has quietly shrunk over the years, the fix might not be more battery at all — it might be a fresh battery. An aging battery holds less, so a simple, inexpensive swap can bring your original runtime right back. Rule that out before you invest in add-on packs or a bigger unit.

> **✔ A fresh battery is the cheapest runtime**
> If the minutes dropped over time, replace the tired battery first. It often restores all the runtime you were missing, for little money.

Keeping expectations realistic

Even stretched, a UPS is still a bridge.

Trimming and add-on batteries can meaningfully extend a UPS, but they won't turn it into a whole-home generator that runs for days. A UPS is fundamentally a bridge of minutes to a few hours, not a long-haul power source. For hours or days of real backup, the bridge hands off to a power station or generator — that's the design, and it works beautifully.

> **! Don't ask a UPS to be a generator**
> If you find yourself wanting a UPS to run for many hours or to power big appliances, you've reached the edge of what it's for. That's the power-station or generator's job.

Prioritize what stays on

In a long outage, choose what matters and let the rest rest.

When you know an outage will be long, cut the battery load to the true essentials — often just the internet and phone gear, so you stay reachable. Shut the computer down gracefully early rather than draining the battery keeping it awake. Spending your minutes on what matters most is itself a way of extending the runtime that counts.

> **✔ Save the minutes for the essentials**
> A long outage is the time to be ruthless: keep the phone and internet alive, and let the rest go. That focus can double the useful runtime.

A staged plan for any outage length

Line the layers up and no outage catches you flat.

- **The first seconds** — the UPS catches the blink with no flicker.
- **The first minutes** — the UPS holds while you save, shut down, or trim the load.
- **The next hours** — a power station recharges the UPS or powers the essentials.
- **The long haul** — a generator carries the biggest, longest outages (used safely outdoors).

> **★ A layered plan beats one big battery**
> The smartest setups aren't one huge UPS — they're a UPS for the catch and a bigger source behind it. I'll help you stage yours.

Common mistakes

The ways folks chase runtime the hard way.

- **Buying a bigger UPS** when trimming the load would have done it.
- **Overlooking a tired battery** that's the real reason runtime dropped.
- **Sharing one UPS** between the internet and a hungry desktop.
- **Expecting a UPS to run for hours** instead of bridging to a bigger source.

> **! Trim and refresh before you spend big**
> Lighten the load and check the battery's age first. Those two steps solve most runtime complaints for little or no money.

For the very long outages

When outages last days, think beyond the UPS entirely.

For multi-day outages — more common out in the country — the plan shifts to a generator or a large power station, possibly kept charged by solar. The UPS still plays its part as the seamless bridge for your sensitive electronics, but the endurance comes from the bigger source. Our power-and-backup guides on power stations, generators, and solar cover that side.

> **✔ The UPS bridges; the big source endures**
> However long the outage, the roles stay the same: the UPS gives the instant, clean catch, and a generator or big battery provides the hours.

Common Questions

The runtime questions I hear most.

Q: How can I make my UPS last longer for free?

Trim the load: move the printer, chargers, and extras off the battery outlets, turn off the monitor while you wait, and keep only the essentials on battery. It's the cheapest runtime there is.

Q: Can I add more battery to a UPS?

Some models accept add-on battery packs that extend runtime at the same load. If yours doesn't, a bigger UPS or a fresh battery are the other routes.

Q: Why did my runtime get shorter over the years?

The battery has aged and holds less. A simple, inexpensive battery swap usually restores your original runtime — check that before buying more battery.

Q: How do I get hours of runtime?

Not from a UPS alone — bridge it to a power station or generator that keeps it charged. The UPS handles the instant catch; the bigger source carries the hours.

Q: Should I buy one big UPS or split my gear?

For staying online, splitting off a dedicated internet UPS often gives far more useful runtime than one shared unit. Match each UPS to its job.

> **★ Want the most minutes for the money?**
> I'll show you the free trims first, then the smart add-ons for your setup. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

The runtime checklist

Everything from this guide, in one list.

- ❑ Move non-essentials off the battery outlets.
- ❑ Turn off the monitor and thirsty gear while on battery.
- ❑ Give light gear (internet) its own dedicated UPS.
- ❑ Check for a tired battery before buying more.
- ❑ Add battery packs or a bigger UPS if you truly need more.
- ❑ For hours or days, bridge to a power station or generator.

> **✔ Trim, refresh, then add**
> Trim the load, refresh a tired battery, and only then add more battery. That order gets you the most runtime for the least money.

Quick wins vs bigger steps

From free to bigger investments, at a glance.

What you do	What it costs
Move gear off the battery	Nothing — instant
Turn off the monitor	Nothing
A fresh battery (if aged)	A little — restores runtime
Add-on battery pack	Some — more minutes
Power station to recharge	More — but hours

Work down the list only as far as you need. Most folks find the top few rows get them all the runtime they were after.

Where to go next

You've got runtime down — here's what pairs with this guide.

- Understand the load side: our 'sizing and runtime' guide.
- For the long haul: 'UPS vs power station.'
- Restore lost minutes: 'replacing the battery.'
- Keep the internet up longest: 'keep your internet up.'

Follow whatever question is on your mind. Each guide stands on its own.

You don't have to do this alone

You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person is one call away.

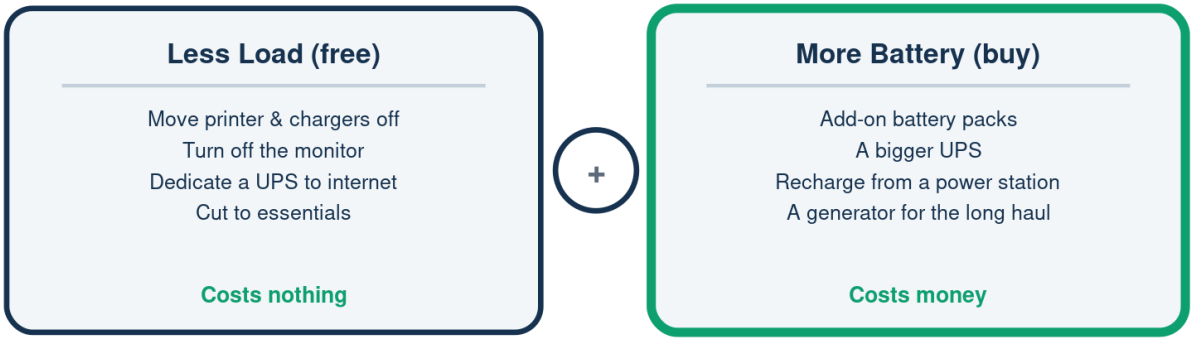
I hope this guide made extending the runtime of your UPS feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything.

When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat $99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for $49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. Setting up a plug-in UPS is friendly, everyday work I'm glad to do with you; I don't do licensed electrical work myself, so for a hardwired unit or any panel or wiring work I'll help you line up a trustworthy local pro.

> **★ Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home**
> Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

Two Ways to More Runtime

Trim first, then add battery

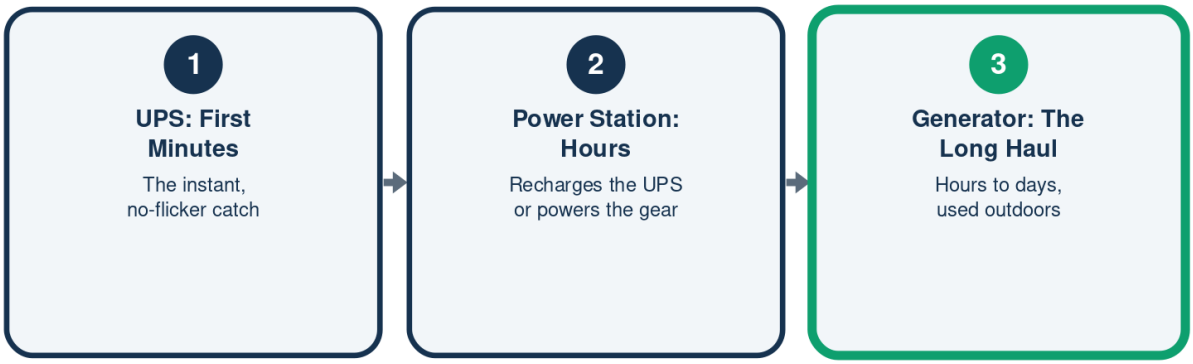


Lighten the load before you spend on battery.

Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.

The Hand-Off for a Long Outage

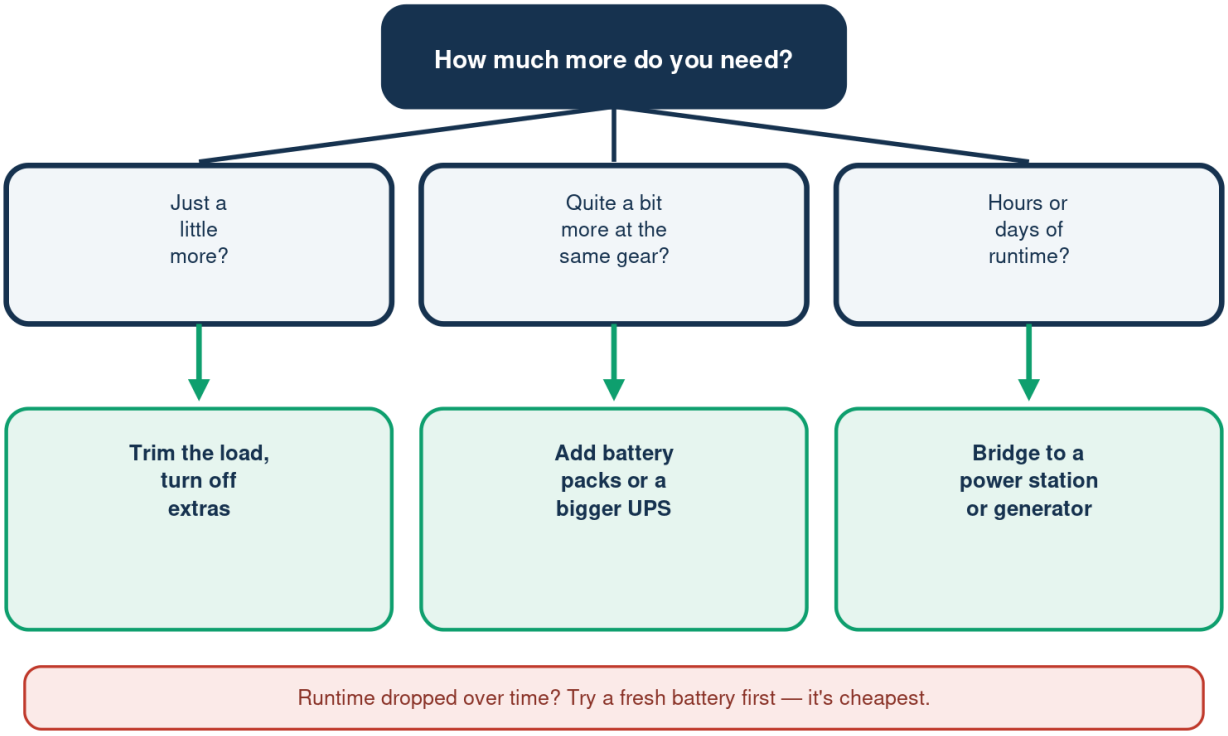
Each layer covers a different stretch



A UPS bridges; a bigger source provides the endurance.

Need More Runtime?

A starting point, not the final word



Runtime dropped over time? Try a fresh battery first — it's cheapest.

Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.

Quick Wins vs Bigger Steps

From free to bigger investments

	What it costs
Move gear off the battery	Nothing — instant
Turn off the monitor	Nothing
Add-on battery pack	Some money
Power station to recharge	More — but hours

Work down only as far as you need — the top rows often suffice.

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A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill.

I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that comes from using these guides. Thanks for reading, and stay safe out there.

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