



Battery charger

Latest hi-tech devices will keep your car's battery in good condition all year round

AE AGM, gel, stop/start – today's chargers have to cope with all the latest tech while still performing their primary roles of reviving and maintaining batteries. Gone are the days of big linear chargers that had more in common with toasters than today's designs, which are packed with electronics and switch modes to match the state and requirements of the battery. They can also recondition long-neglected powerpacks.

So which is the one for your car? We enlisted the help of CTEK to conduct our most comprehensive charger test so far, with nine contenders. Speed of charging was vital in our assessment, and we monitored the average charge rate. We checked for sparks during misuse, electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) and the minimum voltage each would work at. Instructions, specification, versatility and price were also rated.

The best

CTEK Time To Go CT5

Price: £82.95

Contact: www.ctek.com



BATTERY chargers have become far more sophisticated in recent years with multiple modes and functions, but that doesn't mean drivers have kept up with the technological progress. So if desulphation, absorption and bulk charging go over your head, this is the charger for you. It still has the various modes, but keeps things simple with a display that shows charging progress and when you can try to start the car. Instructions are limited as a result, but you lose nothing in performance as it charged close to its 5Amp rating and breezed through our EMC and misuse tests.

The rest

NOCO Genius G7200

Price: £89.99

Contact: no.co



IT was close at the top, but the big NOCO just lost out to the CTEK. Just about everything is bigger on the G7200. The leads are longer and the 35mm clamps the biggest here. It also pipped the CTEK in the charge test by close to 40 minutes over nine hours. But its average charge rate was some way off its claimed 7.2Amps. There is a progress display, but overall the CTEK is easier to understand. Still, if you need 24V charging, go for this.



NOCO Genius G3500

Price: £53.95

Contact: no.co

THE G3500 got much closer to its claimed 3.5Amp charging than its big brother, averaging 3.4, but CTEK's MXS 3.8 needed almost an hour less to revive its test battery. Even so, this can handle motorcycle and garden 6V cells and has a reconditioning mode. It packs the G7200's long leads and big clamps, too. Its instructions and display could be easier to use, but this is a capable unit at a competitive price.



CTEK MXS 3.8

Price: £57.34

Contact: www.ctek.com



THIS got within 0.2Amps of its claimed charge rate – closer than any rival, and great if all you have is a 12V battery. It lacked the NOCO's 6V option, but there is a mode for small 12V batteries like those on motorbikes. And the package still appeals, with good-quality leads and clamps, plus a neat nylon bag for instructions and the unused lead. It comes with both clamps and a lead that can be bolted to the battery permanently.

