



# Head Torch Information

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TSA





## Introduction

A head torch is an invaluable item for camping and hiking, and with so many to choose from, it can be a bit daunting to understand the technical terms, and even have an understanding of what you need for your adventures.

Before investing in new gear, we recommend to have a good think about where and what you will use it for and buy 'fit for purpose'. What we mean by that is buying a product at a price range that suits your intended use, and not spending too much money on something that you don't need, or a product that may be too complicated for your usual use.

If you can borrow an item, or have used one before, this is always a great way to find a starting point for knowing what you like and don't like about outdoor gear. It's never fun to get out there and realise it doesn't suit you.

There are a huge range of headtorches on the market, ranging from a few dollars from a bargain shop through to many hundreds for high end, super bright all night beams. A basic starting point, we suggest you look at the lower end of market and work your way up.

As with all gear, once you do purchase something, then make sure you know how to use it, wear it, try it at night, know how long it lasts for, make sure it fits with your beanie or hat, and doesn't give sore forehead or a headache.

So have a read of the rest of this guide and good luck with your nighttime purchase.



## Technical information and so many options!

### Lumens

This is the most significant thing to consider.

Lumens measure the brightness of a headtorch. For hiking, a headtorch with 300-600 lumens is sufficient. However, if you plan on doing more technical or harder night-time activities, you might want something brighter. They go up to 1000 lumens and more, and will have external battery packs for this intensity. Most will have a setting that allows you to adjust the lumens, ie: full mode and half mode - make sure you know how to use this feature as it can save lots of battery.



### Battery Type

The second most important thing to consider is Rechargeable vs. Batteries. Rechargeable are environmentally friendly and cost-effective in the long run, but they cannot be recharged during your event, so you must know how they last and must ensure they are charged before leaving home. Battery torches (AA or AAA) are more traditional, and more convenient in remote areas without power sources, and good for multi day trips where you can carry backup batteries.

### Beam Distance

A beam distance of 50-70 meters is typically adequate for hiking, but pretty much any headtorch that throws out enough light will suit you walking around in the dark. If you are trail running then you will want to consider this more carefully.





## Battery Life

Headtorchs with longer battery life are obviously great, but how many times are you really going to be out all night long. More likely is you have it on for an hour or two then do to bed. Battery life can also be significantly extended by using the lower power settings so knowing (and using) this feature is useful. There are a few brands on the market that use both rechargeable and replaceable batteries together however we recommend sticking to one or the other.

## Settings and Modes

Multiple settings (high, low, red light, strobe) can be very useful - but in most cases you just want a high, low etc. Strobe is a hassle and red also takes some getting used to. (Red is for preserving your night vision as it minimises how much your retina changes when you turn the light on). As suggested - don't buy something you don't understand or don't really need. Simple is good.

## Comfort and Weight

Since you'll often be wearing it for a few hours, the headtorch should be lightweight and comfortable, with adjustable straps. Most torches meet this criteria pretty well. A decision to make is a front or back battery, as some cheaper front battery torches can be heavy on the front of the head and bounce around when you walk. Make sure it fits on your head with your hat, beanie, helmet, or anything else you often wear on your own adventures.





## Cost and purpose

Throughout our adventures, we've tried a number of headtorches with both good and limited success. One of favourite stories is our first Rogaine as a racing pair - which was a 12 hour overnight navigation race, where Adrian gave Tracey "his best headtorch" only for it to power down after a few hours with no spare batteries. She then spent the next 8 hours literally holding and following him through the forest without being able to see anything. It did create an interesting start to a lasting relationship, and there were a few key lessons learned, starting with 'never trust Adrian when he tells you something'. He really did lend out his best torch, whilst he went and borrowed an even better one which he ultimately bought - check out the AY-UP brand if you are after a lifelong powerful head torch.

As for purchase price, it's a fit for you. If you intend to use the torch lots and happy to lend it out to get the best out of it, then towards \$200 might be our budget. We recommend for most people and most hiking and camping situations, a light in the range of \$70 to \$150 is going to get a good torch that will go the night.

The last few torch tips:

- Always charge your lights before you go, or find a way to use the not quite used batteries (such as the TV remote), recycle them properly. and head out for your adventures with fresh batteries.
- If it has an easy on/off button, then tape it off, or find some type of cover so it doesn't accidentally turn on in your bag and go flat.

# Our recommendations

Anyway, here's a few that we personally like:

**Options from cheapest to most expensive:**

## **Ebay torch.**

- <https://shorturl.at/773HS>
- For less than \$20 this actually a solid walking light and great backup.



## **Black Diamond Spot 300**

- <https://www.wildearth.com.au/buy/black-diamond-astro-300-headtorch-s22-gpht/BD6206740004ALL1>
- \$40 AUD and 350 Lumens. A good cheaper quality brand .

## **Petzl Actik 450 or 600**

- <https://www.wildearth.com.au/buy/petzl-actik-core-grey/L370-E065AA00>
- \$90 to \$150 and from 400 to 600 lumens
- Common midrange lights (so put your name on it) and will meet your hiking needs

## **Petzl Iko Core**

<https://shorturl.at/w0pTS>

- Approx \$150 and 350 lumens
- Super light with rear battery design.

## **Fenix HL65R**

<https://ledtorches.com.au/product/fenix-hm65r-1400-lumens-usb-rechargeable-led-headtorch/>

- Approx \$150 and 950 lumens
- An impressive brightness level and durability, perfect for more demanding hikes and adventures.

More higher end considerations:

Petzl Swift RL (\$240 and 1100 lumens)

Petzl Nao RL (\$300 and 1500 lumens)

There are lots of websites if you are keen for more research.





**Sleep under the  
stars at least once  
a year for  
a life well spent!**

