

UPDATE: THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2008

Belkin Mini Surge Protector

Digg [submit](#)

By: **Stephan Somogyi**

Pocket-Size Powerhouse



The Mini Surge is incredibly handy for recharging your USB devices while traveling.

Back when FireWire was first introduced, one of its coolest features was that it delivered power and was a fast data conduit. At the time, USB's trickle of electrons wasn't enough to power much of anything. As devices became more frugal with their electricity, USB slowly turned into a recharging standard for many small gadgets.

But there's one major difference in how Macs handle these ports while asleep: FireWire ports continue to receive power, whereas USB ports don't. So you can recharge a FireWire device while your laptop is asleep, but not a USB device. You have to leave the whole system running just to charge your iPod.

Enter the Belkin Mini Surge Protector. It's a small, three-outlet surge protector with two power-only USB ports. It has a clever plug that rotates in 90-degree increments to orient the unit relative to the power socket it's plugged into—this comes in very handy when you're trying to plug into a two-outlet wall socket that's got something else plugged into the other outlet.

We weren't able to conjure up an electrical storm to test its surge suppression capabilities, but we did use the Mini Surge's USB ports to recharge a BlackBerry Pearl, a fifth-generation iPod, and a Jabra Bluetooth Headset, all with their stock USB cables (two at a time). This process went so well that **we found the Mini Surge to be super useful at home as well as when traveling, since it allows you to retire unitasker power bricks and use the standard USB cables instead.** Sure, the Mini Surge consumes some standby power when sitting idle, but it's probably a lot less than the combined total of the replaced power bricks. It's 110-volt only, but you can use standard converters if you're traveling overseas where the voltages and plug types are different.

The bottom line. If you travel in the territory of 110V power, you should get a Belkin Mini Surge Protector. And it's useful even if you're stationary in 110V-land.

COMPANY: Belkin

CONTACT: www.belkin.com

PRICE: \$29.99

REQUIREMENTS: 110V power

+ Well thought-out industrial design. USB charging is very useful, even at home.

- Only works with 110V power. Draws some standby power.