

## A better power strip

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I've often heard SmartPower President Brian Keane talk about "phantom load"—the power that home electronics use when we think they are turned off, but are really still drawing juice. Up to 75% of the electricity that home electronics uses is consumed when the devices are "off."

I followed [Brian's suggestion](#) to plug in a bunch of my electronics into a power strip—one that allows me to really turn the power off with the flip of a switch. The problem is that my power strip is under my desk and, to be perfectly honest, I didn't always climb under the desk to hit the switch as often as I should. I no longer have that excuse.

This week my new [Belkin Conserve power strip](#) arrived. This is an 8 outlet power strip/surge protector with a clever new feature—a remote control. (They also make a 10 outlet version.) The remote is currently sitting on my desk, but I think I'll use the self-adhesive backing it came with and stick it on the wall next to the light switch. The remote has a modern look, and actually doesn't look much different than the light switch that is already there—it will fit right in.

Here's what I plugged into my Conserve: AV receiver, TV, DVD player, cell phone charger, desk lamp and a computer monitor. I plugged my TiVO into one of the 2 always-on outlets and my Mac into the other. I elected to leave my computer in an always-on outlet because I come and go so frequently during the day, shutting it down and restarting it every time doesn't seem practical.

Now, when I walk out of my home office—even if it's just to the kitchen to make some coffee—I just tap the switch and all of those devices switch off. It's absolutely painless and I'm not only saving money, I'm helping save the planet.

The Belkin Conserve is \$50 for the 8 outlet version and \$60 for the 10 outlet unit, and [available directly from Belkin](#).