

## Flashlight Alternatives!



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Flashlights are a bright idea, but their batteries don't last forever. Consider these alternatives:

1. The **dynamo flashlight** has its own little generator to light it. The cheapest variety eliminates the battery completely. It will stay lighted as long as you keep pumping the generator handle. This is useful simply because there are NO batteries, but the pumping action produces enough noise to scare moose away.

2. With the advent of **LEDs**, a **dynamo flashlight** can produce more light than with an incandescent bulb. Typically these newer flashlights use 3 LEDs. LEDs are supposed to last 10,000 hours or more. You will wear out the flashlight before its LED bulbs go bad.

3. The **cranking dynamo flashlight** adds a battery or capacitor that can be recharged. You crank on the flashlight for several minutes to build up a charge. Use the flashlight without cranking until the lights go out. Then you crank it again.

4. However, anything with moving parts has a finite life. The last alternative has no moving parts. It is a **photoluminescent panel** that in 15 minutes absorbs energy from the sun or a halogen headlight. It stays "bright" for hours - the manufacturer says up to 5 days. The 4" x 6" photoluminescent panel comes in a tough plastic bag. After using it for a while, I found the luminescent specks drop to the bottom of the bag. They still work, though the panel isn't as bright.

Now, "bright" is relative. Compared to any of the flashlights, the photoluminescent panel is not very bright. You can't read with it. You can play cards in a tent. Once your eyes are adapted to darkness, you can gingerly find your way down a forest path on a cloudy or moonless night. Great for a 72-hour kit or Bug-Out Bag! A source is <<http://www.uvpaqlite.com>>.

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