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Tested: Best Portable Jump Starters for 2025

We rolled a dead Mitsubishi into the garage and tested six jump-packs trying to resuscitate it. Here's what we learned.

Tested By [Collin Morgan](#), [Jon Langston](#) and [Mason Cordell](#) Updated: May 29, 2025



MICHAEL SIMARI | CAR AND DRIVER

This article was updated with new information in May 2025.

You've heard the horror stories. Maybe you've even experienced that dreaded "click-click" yourself. It's a situation auto enthusiasts know all too well, but there's a handy device that'll provide a lot of peace of mind: the portable jump starter.

Truly the epitome of "you don't think you need one until you need one," a portable jump starter gives you the ability to boost your battery all on your own; no need to wait for another vehicle to come to the rescue. But which one is right for you? Is one brand better than another? And how powerful

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should it be? We put six portable jump starters through hands-on, real-world testing to answer your questions and help you decide which one to get.

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Our Top Picks



BEST PORTABLE JUMP STARTER

Clore Automotive JNC325

\$147 AT AMAZON

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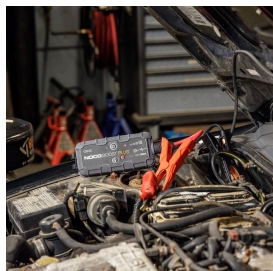


BEST POWER STATION

Stanley J5C09D Power Station

\$100 AT AMAZON

[Read more](#)



MOST COMPACT

NOCO Boost Plus GB40

↗ \$125 ↘ \$100 AT AMAZON

[Read more](#)

**BEST FOR SHOPS**

Clore Automotive Jump-N-Carry JNC770R

\$154 AT AMAZON

[Read more](#)



DeWalt DXAEJ14 Power Station

\$349 AT AMAZON

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Key Takeaways

- The [Clore Jump-N-Carry JNC325](#) is our choice for **Best Overall Jump Starter** because it has enough power to jump just about any vehicle on the road while being compact enough to stash in your vehicle.
- [NOCO's Boost Plus GB40](#) not only worked well, but it's the smallest jump starter we tested and is our **Most Compact** pick.
- With nearly three times the energy of our favorite portable unit *and* an integrated air compressor, the [Stanley J5C09D](#) was chosen as **Best Power Station** to keep in the garage.

Things to Consider

There are two main kinds of battery boosters: power stations and jump starters. Portable power stations are generally larger and multi-purpose, but too big to be truly portable. Jump starters are usually small enough to keep in your trunk (or even glovebox). The answer to which type you need

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depends on how you'll be using it. If you just want a little one to have in your vehicle in case of emergencies, go for the jump starter. If you have a fleet of vehicles that tend to need some help waking up in the morning, get a power station.

But how much power does your jump starter need for your vehicle? It can be overwhelming to sift through all the numbers of each product—cranking amps, amp hours, peak amperage, and so on. Here's what you need to know:

Peak Amperage (Current): This is the figure that manufacturers typically boast about—but bigger doesn't always mean better. Higher peak amperage ratings simply mean more power, but that isn't always necessary. For units powered by lead-acid batteries, peak amperage is the initial jolt of power from the device, typically lasting 20-50 milliseconds, followed by 30 seconds of sustained amperage. The 30-second figure is what's reported as Cranking Amps (CA) or Cold Cranking Amps (CCA) depending on the temperature (32°F for CA and 0°F for CCA).

However, portable jump starters with lithium-ion batteries cannot deliver high amperage for an extended duration due to the risk of [thermal runaway](#)—a phenomenon that causes lithium-ion battery cells to go into an uncontrollable, self-heating state that can result in fire, and we don't want that. Most units of this type are only able to deliver high amperage for between two and five seconds, followed by a power cut rather than 30 seconds of sustained amperage.

We reached out to the experts at [Batteries Plus](#) for some more information. They told me jump starters will usually provide an estimated number of starts that a fully charged device can attempt, until it needs to be recharged. It's worth noting that a half-charged jump starter will still deliver the same power, every time, until it's drained. It just can't attempt as many jump-starts as a fully charged device.

Cranking Amps (CA) and Cold Cranking Amps (CCA): These figures will be much lower than the peak amperage rating because they [measure](#)

continuous power over 30 seconds. CA takes its reading at 32 degrees F, while CCA measures this at 0 degrees F.

For those of us who reside in colder climates, the CCA rating is especially important. Your vehicle's battery will have CA and CCA ratings too, normally located on the top. You'll want a jump starter with a CA and CCA rating near (or ideally above) that respective number, which is usually around 400–500 for the average passenger vehicle.

If the portable jump starter is unable to sustain high amperage for 30 seconds to meet the standards of CA and CCA, the sustained amperage output is called "Starting Amps" or something similar.

Energy (Wh): This refers to the total energy that can be stored in a unit, measured in watt-hours (Wh). It indicates how much juice a jump starter can ultimately provide. The higher the number, the more jump starts a device will be able to attempt before needing a recharge.

Understanding what these numbers mean and determining the range you're looking for will be very helpful in narrowing down which portable jump starter to buy.

Our Test Vehicle

Contrary to popular belief, the *Car and Driver* fleet doesn't consist only of brand-new cars—there's a solid group of clunkers out back that have been acquired over the years. (“The Boneyard,” as we call it.) To properly test these jump starters, we wanted a vehicle with a completely bricked battery. It wasn't long until we found a 1997 **Mitsubishi Eclipse GSX** that fit our needs. It took plenty of dash tapping, verbal encouragement, and some fancy footwork on the gas pedal to get it started for the first time in months, but it worked.

How We Evaluated Jump Starters

We limped the Eclipse into our garage and got to work. The car's battery was so shot that we could watch it run out of juice between each test with our voltmeter. This actually worked out, because it meant we didn't have to discharge the battery manually after each jump. Once the battery was dead, we'd hook up each jump starter and try it out.

Because the car battery was drained each time we connected a jumper to it, some of the devices would read the connection as a "reverse polarity" error (we hooked it up correctly, we promise). This was fascinating, but also unveiled a flaw with some of the new-style jump starters: Those without a **manual override button** would not recognize the connection, so they simply wouldn't work. We understand the need for this fail-safe, but the inability to override the error manually and get a jolt from the unit eliminated one of the jump starters we planned on testing and required another to be stabilized with a new battery in order to go back and jump-start the Eclipse—not much help if you're stranded somewhere.

Along with testing whether each jump starter successfully started the car, we also looked at the following parameters:

- Total energy it took to recharge the units from total depletion (using a [Kill-A-Watt](#)) to sense-check the energy capacity claims
- Weight
- Ease of use
- Lead length (measured from base of lead to end of clamp)
- Clamp quality
- Portability (for portable jump starters)
- Stability under the hood (for power stations)
- Additional features

Best Portable Jump Starters, Tested

Clore Automotive JNC325



\$147 AT AMAZON

\$179 AT NAPAONLINE.COM

~~\$250~~ \$158 AT WALMART

CREDIT: MICHAEL SIMARI

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<u>PROS</u> ⊕ Long cables ⊕ Solid specs all across the board	<u>CONS</u> ⊗ The pricey portable jump starter choice
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The **Jump-N-Carry JNC325** is our choice for Best Overall Portable Jump Starter. We were impressed by the 24-inch cable length, the ease of use, and solid specs all across the board.

The JNC325 features just two easy buttons: power and override. During our jump test, we did need to press the override button, and the jump starter started the vehicle after that with ease. It comes with a soft carrying case that can store the cables, jumper starter, and charging cords.

The JNC325 boasts enough power to start just about any consumer vehicle on the road, is compact enough to store in the trunk, and features the specs you need to jump a vehicle anywhere, anytime. That's why it's our pick for the best portable jump starter.

Additional features:

- LED flashlight
- 15V/10A DC output
- 5V 1A USB-A output
- 5V 2.4A USB-A output
- 5V/9V USB-C input

Peak Amperage	2000 amps
Starting Amps	450 amps
Recharge Energy	100 watt-hours

Weight	2.6 pounds
Lead Length	24.0 inches

BEST POWER STATION

Stanley J5C09D Power Station



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\$100 AT AMAZON

\$90 AT HOME DEPOT

\$95 AT WALMART

CREDIT: MICHAEL SIMARI

<u>PROS</u> ⊕ Easy-to-read control panel ⊕ Adjustable LED light	<u>CONS</u> ⊗ Doesn't come with a power cord—separate extension cord required
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If you're looking for a power station to jump your vehicle and top off the tire pressure, we recommend the **Stanley J5C09D**. It's not as portable as some of the other jump starters in this list, but it's fantastic for storing in the garage for jumping multiple vehicles.

The Stanley aced our jump test, starting the Eclipse without complaint. We were impressed with the easy-to-read control panel, nice clamps, and an adjustable light.

The other attractive feature to a large power station like this is the included 120 psi air compressor, which can be used to fill tires, basketballs, or other inflatables. And with nearly three times the energy onboard compared to our favorite portable unit, this do-it-all power station will jump just about anything in your garage.

Additional features:

- Adjustable LED light
- 120 psi air compressor with Auto-Stop
- 12-volt DC outlet
- 5-volt USB outlet
- Nozzle adapter

Peak Amperage	1000 amps
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Starting Amps	500 amps
Recharge Energy	290 watt-hours
Weight	17.2 pounds
Lead Length	26.5 inches

MOST COMPACT

NOCO Boost Plus GB40

ON
SALE



Now 20% Off

~~\$125~~ \$100 AT AMAZON

~~\$120~~ \$100 AT WALMART

\$99 AT FARMANDFLEET.COM

CREDIT: MICHAEL SIMARI

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<u>PROS</u> ⊕ Small and portable ⊕ Easy interface	<u>CONS</u> ⊗ Cables are very short, clamps difficult to squeeze
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Portability is a key aspect when buying a jump starter, and it doesn't get much more compact than the **NOCO Boost Plus GB40**. Weighing in at a measly two pounds, it's the smallest jump starter in our test overall.

It's got decent power, an override button, an easy interface, and two work lights. It jumped our Eclipse once the override function was activated, but that one jump on a severely drained battery reduced the NOCO's capacity from full to just 25 percent.

With this size comes a lack of power storage; its 30 watt-hours is the lowest in our test group. (However, NOCO does offer other, [more capable units](#) with as much as three times the energy onboard.) We wouldn't recommend banking on getting more than one or two jumps per charge with this. The leads are also extremely short, and the clamps are difficult to squeeze. But if you're short on space and want to have a portable jump starter around, this is the one to get.

Additional features:

- Two LED lights with multiple emittance options
- Soft carrying bag
- Micro-USB charging cable (no brick)
- 2.1A USB-A output
- 2.1A Micro-USB input

Peak Amperage	1000 amps
Recharge Energy	30 watt-hours
Weight	2.0 pounds

Lead Length

13.5 inches

BEST FOR SHOPS

Clore Automotive Jump-N-Carry JNC770R

**\$154 AT AMAZON**

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\$354 \$157 AT WALMART

~~\$200~~ \$165 AT JBTOOLS.COM

CREDIT: MICHAEL SIMARI

<u>PROS</u> ⊕ Wild amount of power capacity ⊕ Super long leads and curved clamps	<u>CONS</u> ⊗ Large and heavy for a jump starter lacking any other functions
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If you own a shop or a garage with a bunch of cars that don't care for cold morning starts, we believe the **JNC770R** is the way to go. It's the simplest large jump starter to use thanks to its lack of a tire inflator function. It simply jump starts cars well and often.

The thing we liked about the JNC770R the most is the incredibly long leads and curved-end clamps. This allows you to get at batteries that might be buried more than usual. The spill-proof lead-acid battery inside stores a wild amount of power—the 410 Wh it took to recharge was by far the highest in the test—which is why we recommend it for shops.

However, it's expensive and quite heavy. We also noticed that it's not very stable—it tipped over while resting on the engine after starting it. But if you need a reliable jump starter with oodles of oomph, this is the one to get.

Additional features:

- LED light
- 12V power supply
- 5v/1.1A USB-A output
- 5v/2.1A USB-A output

Peak Amperage	1700 amps
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CA	425 amps
Recharge Energy	410 watt-hours
Weight	22.3 pounds
Lead Length	69.0 inches

DeWalt DXAEJ14 Power Station



\$349 AT AMAZON

~~\$100~~ \$178 AT WALMART

\$143 AT HOME DEPOT

CREDIT: MICHAEL SIMARI

<u>PROS</u> ⊕ Excellent stability ⊕ Alternator test function	<u>CONS</u> ⊗ The beeping makes a racket
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The **DeWalt DXAEJ14** power station features a 120-psi air compressor, and weighs less than the other large power stations we tested. It fared well in our test—most notably in stability and clamp quality. But there was one issue.

The beeping. This chatty Cathy beeped incessantly and obnoxiously, to the point where we were looking forward to turning it off. It beeps when turned on, beeps when hooking up, and beeps that it needs recharging. The controls are also a bit messy, with too much information shown at once on the screen.

If beeping doesn't bother you, this is a solid choice. But if you're like us, there are better, quieter options out there.

Additional features:

- Dual LED lights
- 120 psi air compressor
- Alternator test function
- 12V DC input
- 5V/3.1A USB-A output
- 5V/3.1 USB-A output

Peak Amperage	1400 amps
Instant Amps	700 amps
Recharge Energy	250 watt-hours
Weight	16.9 pounds

Lead Length

39.5 inches

Avapow A28

**Now 33% Off**

~~\$\$\$~~ \$60 AT AMAZON

~~\$130~~ \$50 AT WALMART

CREDIT: MICHAEL SIMARI

<u>PROS</u>  Impressive specs for the price	<u>CONS</u>  Struggled in our testing
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The **Avapow A28** boasts fantastic specs—high peak amperage and great energy storage. But unfortunately, it struggled in our jump test.

When we hooked it up, it immediately displayed the standby light. Because of this, it wouldn't deliver power to the battery. We had to disconnect the leads, connect it to a known good battery to bypass the standby light, and then hook it back up to the Eclipse. After that, the car started up.

But you can't have this happen in the real world, and that's why the Avapow is toward the bottom of our list.

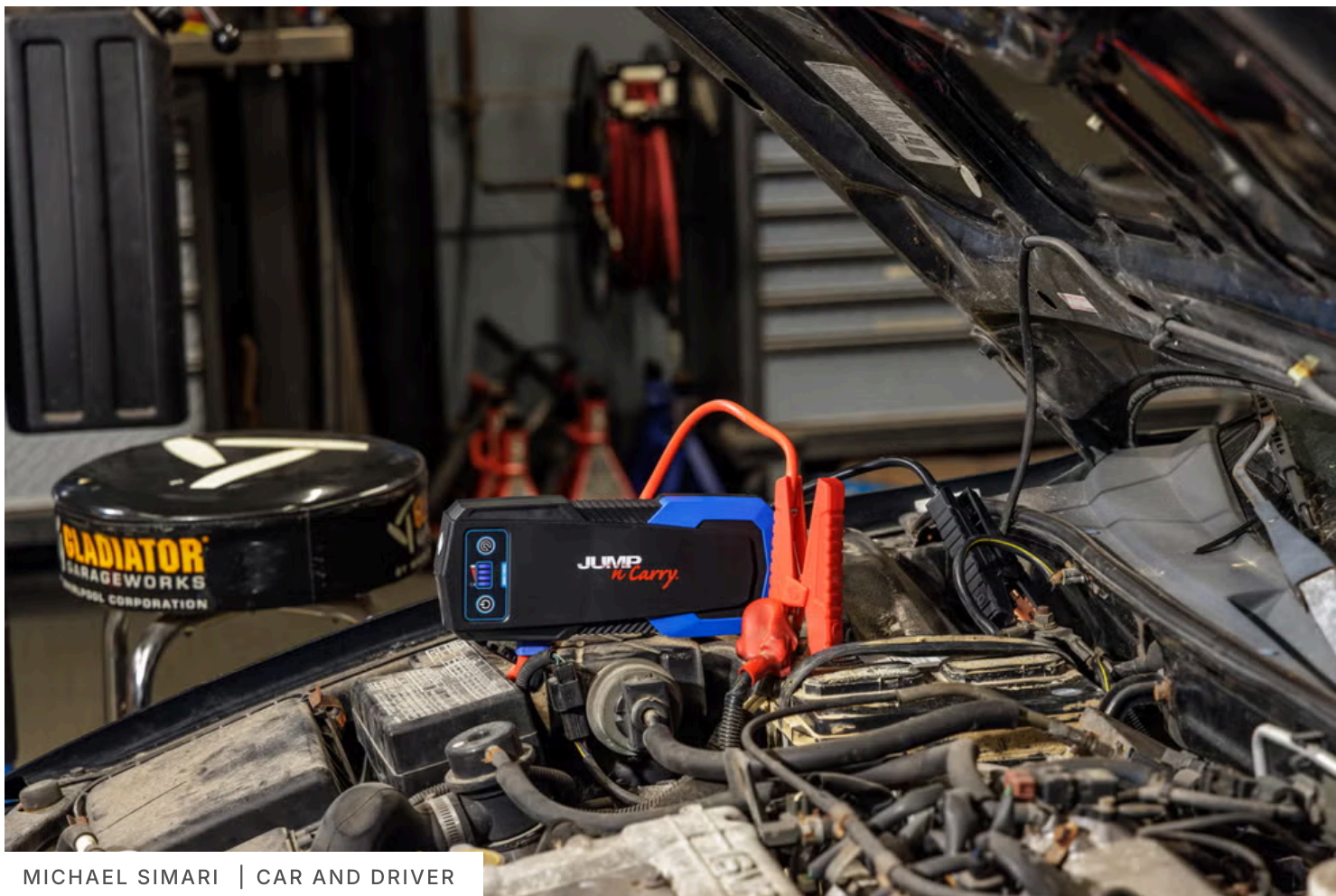
Additional features:

- LED flashlight
- Shell-style carrying case
- 12V/1.5A USB-A output
- 5V/2.4A USB-A output
- 5V/9V/12V USB-C input

Peak Amperage	3000 amps
Recharge Energy	200 watt-hours
Weight	2.6 pounds

Lead Length	14.0 inches
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How We Tested Portable Jump Starters



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We recruited a lifeless **1997 Mitsubishi Eclipse GSX** for this test, equipped with a battery that was dead as a doornail. Of course, this was an ideal candidate for evaluating jump starters, as it rapidly ran out of juice on its own. This meant we could jump the car, let the battery fully drain in a few minutes, and then jump the car again with the next device.

We tested each portable jump starter this way and discovered a flaw that was apparent in two devices: a lack of a manual override button. The car's battery was so low that two of the jump starters didn't even recognize it and they would only attempt a jump once the manual override button was pressed. If a portable starter didn't have this feature, it would be unable to start the vehicle. We decided to omit these units from our test findings.

As we tested each product, we took extensive notes on other things we noticed about them. We also discharged each jump starter completely, and then

recharged it fully, measuring the total energy it accepted using a Kill-A-Watt. Those watt-hour figures are included in our specs.

FAQs



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What is the difference between a jump starter and a battery charger?

A jump starter simply provides a jolt of power to a vehicle's battery, giving it enough juice to start the car. In contrast, battery chargers provide a slow, steady supply of power to the battery, keeping it fully charged over a much longer period of time. Jump starters do not charge the battery significantly—that's what the vehicle's alternator is for.

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We spoke with the experts at Optima Batteries about this, and they recommend applying a battery charger as soon as possible if you need to jump your vehicle. Alternators aren't designed to recover deeply discharged batteries, and doing so can decrease the life span of both the alternator and battery. In short, jump the vehicle, get where you need to go, and then put your battery on a charger to ensure everything lasts as long as it should.

How long should I let my vehicle run after jump-starting it?

The recommended duration is 15–30 minutes. This gives the alternator time to recharge the battery to a stable level. If you don't have that long, be sure to put a dedicated charger on your battery as soon as you can so you don't prematurely burn out your alternator.

Can you store a jump starter in your vehicle?

Totally, especially the smaller, lithium-ion units—that's what they're designed safe.

Can jump-starting ruin my car's battery?

Jump-starting will put a bit of stress on your battery and alternator, but nothing too severe. If you find yourself repeatedly jump-starting your vehicle, it's worth looking into the cause. Most likely, it's the battery in poor health or an issue with the alternator itself, but either way, you don't want to be dealing with dead batteries.

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