

IT'S easy to see red when you're in the middle of yet another blackout, but the bottom line is load-shedding is here to stay. By many accounts we can expect it to continue for another three years as Eskom tries to get back on track with projects that will produce an adequate electricity supply.

But you don't have to be stuck in a black mood when Eskom flips the switch. We searched at large retailers such as Builders Warehouse, Game and Makro and online stores to produce your ultimate guide to surviving load-shedding.

OPTIONS FOR BACK-UP POWER SUPPLY

There are two main options if you want to have many of your appliances and lights on during load-shedding: a generator or an uninterrupted power supply (UPS). Both have pros and cons.

A generator uses petrol or diesel whereas a UPS uses batteries to keep things going. A UPS' rechargeable battery is housed in a box along with a computer card and an inverter that creates the correct energy current.

An electrician can connect a UPS to your main switchboard so it can keep various things on during load-shedding. Or he can connect an extension cord to run from the UPS to a specific appliance you want to keep switched on such as your fridge. Just check the cables have the correct plugs to fit the appliance.

POWER NEEDS

A UPS runs on a battery, which means that when it's flat you need electricity to charge it. Technically you don't have to remember to charge your UPS before load-shedding because it stays on all the time and when the

COST

A generator is less expensive to buy than a UPS. But although the initial cost for a UPS may be higher it could be cheaper in the long run as you don't have to buy petrol or diesel to keep it running or have it serviced, says Alwyn Coetsee, managing director of Turner Morris, which sells construction equipment including generators and UPS systems.

Prices vary according to the wattage the machines can produce.

Generator

2 200 W R3 000 – R5 500
5 500 W R7 000 – R10 500
7 000 W R9 500 – R12 850

UPS

600 W R6 500 – R8 000
1 200 W R8 500 – R9 000
4 800 W R 37 000

POWER DOWN? GEAR UP

We tracked down the best gadgets for when Eskom flips the switch and leaves us without electricity **By PETRO-ANNE VLOK**

