

Electric car charging speed limit

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You may see one automaker claim its EV can use fast charging to charge from 10% to 80% in 35 minutes, while another touts that its EV can add 100 miles of range in just 20 minutes. It's nearly...

EV Charging Test: Genesis GV70 Is Fastest, Chevy Bolt EUV Is Slowest. We rank the fastest- and slowest-charging electric cars, with the Korean triumvirate claiming the top spots and Chevy's...

We teamed up with P3 to test the charging speeds of a number of new EVs. These are the five fastest-charging electric vehicles -- and the three slowest.

What really matters is the average charging rate and how long it takes to add real-world miles. We test from a 10 to 90 percent state of charge on the fastest equipment an EV can handle.

The "new" one I am referring to is what I will call here the 80/20 "rule". This myth says that batteries should never be charged beyond 80% or discharged below 20% lest "irreversible damage" occur.

Another slightly different version of this "rule" suggests that if EV batteries can't be taken safely above or below these limits, then they are really only 60% of their stated size/driving range.

So where has this nonsense come from? Like all good urban myths: it is based loosely on a couple of pieces of information that have been taken out of context, and are borne out of "rules" that might equally apply for an internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle.

So what is the significance of the 80 per cent charging limit?

80% is the recommendation for normal day-to-day charging of non-LFP EV batteries, which are still found in most EVs. (More on the other main lithium battery chemistry type, LFP, later).

For longevity of EV batteries, it is considered best not to stress them unnecessarily by charging to 100% every time you plug-in. For today's EV battery sizes, it is also completely unnecessary to charge to 100% on a regular basis. Even charging my Kona electric to 80% for daily driving, I still only need to charge once every two to three weeks.

It is also worth pointing out that the early EVs with smaller batteries were almost always charged to 100%, and their batteries did not "die" early as a result. Many are still going with those original batteries, albeit with reduced range. To give an example, my 13-year-old iMiEV is still on its original battery with a reliable 70km of its original 110-ish km range left.



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The corollary to the above is that you will not "irreparably" damage the battery by occasionally charging to 100% when needed. (For instance, when leaving home for a long trip). So yes, the top 20% of the battery is available for use when needed, it is not "lost".

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