



# Solar domestic water heating systems

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Lower water bills, clean energy and heating water by the power of the sun are a few great reasons why more people are warming up to solar water heaters. In fact, the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA), a national solar trade association, predicts the use of solar energy will increase by 42% between 2022 and 2025. The good news about solar: After the upfront investment, solar water heaters can pay for themselves in as little as three to six years.

Wondering if a solar water heater is the right choice for your home? Read on to discover the different types of solar water heaters and learn about their pros and cons.

An effective way to heat your water without the use of your energy grid, solar water heaters draw power from the sun. Unlike traditional water heaters, solar water heaters utilize solar collectors on your rooftop to transform sunlight into solar energy, which is then used to heat the water in your home.

Conventional water heaters are powered by electric or gas while solar water heaters draw energy from the sun. Solar water heaters use clean energy to heat water, in contrast to the fossil fuels and coal used with electric or gas water heaters. However, solar collectors can only heat water and can't power your appliances like traditional systems. To power appliances using solar, one would need to install a photovoltaic (PV) solar energy system, often provided by solar energy companies to produce electricity.

Although they are offered in various designs, all solar water heaters include a collector and a storage tank that absorbs the sun's thermal energy to heat water. The two main types of solar water heaters are active and passive; each works differently and requires different equipment. Still, they can both collect enough hot water to fulfill your daily domestic hot water needs.

There are two types of solar water heaters: active and passive solar water heating systems. Active solar systems come in direct or indirect circulating systems. This is how they work:

Passive solar water heating systems store water for cold and cloudy days but can run out of heat after a long cold spell. Passive systems are more dependable, cost less and can last longer than active systems.

Although solar water heaters are more expensive than traditional water heaters, they are incredibly cost-effective since they lower utility bills and make you eligible for solar tax credits. From the materials you choose to system size to installation and maintenance costs, solar water heaters' prices depend on various factors. However, a solar water heater can cost anywhere between \$3,000 to \$9,000.

According to the Department of Energy, your hot water accounts for 14% to 18% of your utility bills. Homeowners spend hundreds of dollars on natural gas and electricity every year to heat the water in their



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homes. Although installing solar equipment comes at a high price, homeowners see savings of \$781 on energy costs each year and a 100% return on their investment in just a few years. From then on, the sun produces free hot water.

Solar water heaters require little maintenance. Just call in a professional every few years to replace the antifreeze in your solar hot water system and you should be fine. The only time you might need to maintain your system is when your home has a high level of hard water mineral deposits which can clog the system. But that can easily be remedied by installing a water softener.

Generating electric and natural gas power increases the carbon footprint. Electricity depends on coal and natural gas contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. Solar water heaters depend on 100% clean, renewable energy generated by the sun which converts that energy to heat water.

Having a renewable energy source in your home is an attractive quality many new homebuyers seek. Research has shown solar water heaters can boost home value between 3% and 4%. This means a home worth \$400,000 could increase in value by up to \$16,000.

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