



# Solar thermal advantages and disadvantages

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Solar technology's recent prevalence has seen both large organizations and individual consumers choose to integrate solar power into commercial facilities and homes nearly everywhere. Solar power's renewable, eco-friendly supply of energy isn't the only factor to consider when deciding to transition your household to a solar system, though. While the best solar companies simplify the solar panel installation process, it is still a lengthy, complex process with many factors and variables to consider.

If you're thinking about offsetting both your environmental impact and power bill by adding solar power to your home or business, our guide on solar energy's pros and cons can help you decide if it'll be a sustainable option for you.

Solar energy is electrical or thermal energy harvested from sunlight. Solar panels contain photovoltaic (PV) cells made up of semiconductor materials (such as silicon) to absorb elemental particles from the sun called photons. When absorbed by the panel, the photons release electrons from the atoms of the semiconductor material and the flow of these electrons within the cell creates an electric current we can direct to our circuits.

Solar panels can be placed anywhere with an abundance of sunlight, such as open fields or rooftops. The more light the panels sit exposed to, the more electricity production potential.

The sun's constant barrage of energy in the form of photons can be collected, transformed and used to power our world--but for you, the question may be more about cost-effectiveness. Is solar efficient enough to power your home or business? Below are the pros and cons of this process and what solar's availability and cost mean for consumers.

For the average consumer, there are many pros and cons of using solar energy in your home or business. Whether your concerns are with saving money on your bills, helping the environment, or becoming energy-independent, here's a list of advantages and disadvantages that should be of concern to you.

Fossil fuel remains a resource in declining supply that, when burned to create energy, releases harmful byproducts into our atmosphere. Solar power has the potential to help us minimize our use of fossil fuels and the impact we have on the environment.

Solar energy can help most consumers power their homes as an alternative or supplement to purchasing electricity from a grid. With power prices on the rise, consumers stand to save a considerable amount on monthly power bills by switching to solar.

A home reliant entirely on solar power features the capacity to function entirely off-grid, especially when



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supplemented with a solar battery system to maintain power during non-daylight hours. These battery systems can also turn solar systems into emergency backups during power outages.

According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, every dollar a solar panel saves you on your electrical bills increases the value of your home by \$20. Also, homes with solar panels sell for four percent higher than those without them. If a home has solar panels, its owners will be saving money in the long run, increasing its appeal and value.

The start-up costs for a solar system represent a significant expense, but the costs are usually mitigated by savings on the electric bill. Consumers can often break even on the investment--usually within six to 10 years--and then start reaping the benefits well before the system needs replacement or considerable maintenance.

Once installed, a solar system requires little maintenance as long as it remains unaffected by environmental factors. If panels are kept clean and free of debris, they should continue to function without any additional action by the consumer for many years.

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