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## Solar Hot Water Heater

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The thought of putting solar panels on your roof may seem daunting. But you don't have to try to go off the grid to save money on your utilities while helping protect the environment. A much simpler and more affordable change is to invest in a solar water heater.

Install a Solar Water Heater

Think hot water isn't a hot topic? The average electric water heater serving a family of four uses 6,400 kilowatt-hours of electricity per year, releasing eight tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, according to the University of Wisconsin's Solar Energy Laboratory. That's more than a typical automobile! Gas-fired heaters release about two tons of CO<sub>2</sub> a year.

Solar water heaters are very reliable and can work in any climate. There are several different types, including those with pumps and those that work passively. You'll need a storage tank and some type of solar collector. Some homeowners use the devices exclusively (sometimes with a gas or electric tankless water heater as a backup), while others pair them with other systems as pre-heaters.

The good news is that home solar water heating systems cost an affordable \$1,500 to \$3,500, and pay for themselves in four to eight years