340 kWh solar battery

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It can be tricky knowing what size battery you need though, because you don’t want to have one too small and find yourself relying on the grid more than you’d planned. However, you also don’t want to spend too much on an oversized battery.

We’ve created this guide to help you work out what size solar battery you’ll need, looking at the differences between large and small solar batteries, if you can have multiple batteries, and what to consider before you buy.

You could also start searching for solar panels-plus-storage by filling in our easy-to-navigate form. Just enter a few simple details and we’ll put you in touch with our trusted suppliers, who’ll get back to you with bespoke quotes for you to compare.

That’s because you don’t want to actually use a battery’s entire capacity, as this can damage it. The usable capacity is called depth of discharge (DoD), and most modern batteries have a DoD of between 90 and 95%.

You also need to consider power output, because size isn’t everything. If you have a battery with a large capacity but low power output, it’ll last for a long time but you won’t be able to power all the appliances in your home.

To work out what size battery you’ll need, you can start by calculating your electricity usage. Look at either your smart meter or your monthly energy bill, which will tell you how much you use on average.

If you use 8 kilowatt hours (kWh) per day, then you’ll need a battery with a capacity of at least 8 kilowatts (kW) to provide all of your energy needs during the day. Keep in mind that you won’t always be at home though, so you could get away with a smaller battery.

You’ll need either multiple batteries or one large battery to go off-grid, but even then you might not be able to go completely off-grid. Actually going fully off-grid requires multiple renewable energy sources to guarantee you can charge your batteries, and these batteries need enough capacity to provide power 100% of the time.

Consider pairing a solar panel system with a small wind turbine or if the environment permits, a small-scale hydroelectric system to charge your battery. This is because the sun will not always shine bright enough to charge your battery optimally, and having a backup energy source helps ensure your battery has enough charge at night.

Getting a battery that’s too big for you to properly charge can lead to chronic undercharging and poor performance, much like how partially charging a smartphone battery can damage it in the long run.

“In June, which was sunny, we used solar for almost all our electricity needs, including the car and hot water. In July and August, we had to use some grid power overnight to charge the batteries because the weather wasn’t so good.”

There are some interesting options if you do want a battery you can scale up as and when needed. Acceleron, a company offering scalable battery modules, lets you increase your battery’s capacity simply by slotting in an extra battery unit.

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