Solar panel uses at home

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Solar power’s popularity is exploding. Using the sun’s energy to generate usable electricity for households is growing by percentages that nearly reach double digits year over year. While many are aware that the best photovoltaic solar panels and their accompanying systems are the most recognized way to harness the sun’s energy, fewer are aware that there’s a multitude of ways to do the same without having to shell out for a solar company to install a full solar energy electrical system.

Some ways are simple, some have even been around for thousands of years and some are slightly more complex. Whatever the case, the sun’s free energy is available for anyone who puts a small amount of effort into harnessing it, whether or not your home already uses a solar PV system for electricity.

Energy-efficient windows and skylights offer nearly unlimited ways to let the sun into your home without largely impacting internal heating and cooling systems. When building or remodeling, ensure that you account for the sun"s trajectory in your location.

It’s always been possible to heat water using the sun. However, several water heater options are now available that streamline the process of heating tap water. They are usually split into one of two categories: active or passive.

Active water heater systems pass potable water through a solar energy collector using pumps. Pumps that run on solar-generated electricity make these systems even better. Another method is to pump the drinkable water through a heat exchanger and allow hot antifreeze fresh from the solar collector to heat it to the faucet.

Passive water heaters consist of water tanks and various components that act as solar heat collectors. These heaters rely on hot water rising above cold water to circulate potable water through the collector or heat exchanger before reaching your indoor plumbing.

Heating your whole home with solar energy is possible and practical anywhere the sun shines. Using systems similar to heating tap water with the sun, a solar home heat system circulates water or an antifreeze liquid through solar heat collectors and heat exchangers. The heated water or antifreeze then enters the home and disperses its heat as it flows through radiators. These systems still require an electrical pump to push the water through the home’s HVAC plumbing.

In any hot water home heating system, a mechanical pump is necessary to circulate hot water throughout the home. Whether your house relies on a gas or electric boiler or even a solar water home heating sytem, a solar pump can increase the system’s overall energy efficiency.

Solar water pumps are available with DC motors that often run directly off of a charge controller and battery

system. Or they can include AC motors that operate off an inverter from a dedicated PV solar panel or a whole-home PV electrical system.

While it may sound a little silly at first, taking a shower doesn’t have to be an indoor event. Many homeowners are discovering that building a discreet outdoor space to freshen up can be a pleasant and relaxing experience. Solar showers are trendy in this space. They range in complexity from a $15 poly bag with a nozzle to a $200 multi-gallon system.

A single solar panel or a small collection of them and a portable power station are all you need to take both AC and DC power anywhere you need to go. These setups store electrical energy from the sun that you can use while camping, at the beach or in the backyard, basically any place away from electrical outlets.

Solar baking ovens and cooking stoves have been used for centuries in various forms. Today, we can use devices designed solely for this purpose. Use solar ovens and stoves for baking, making pizza or even cooking entire meals for indoor or outdoor dining while eliminating the smoke from a fire pit or grill.

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