Beginners guide to solar power



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Welcome to a beginner"s guide on solar power basics, where we will walk through a solar electric power system and how to build one - Solar panels, batteries, charge controllers, and inverters. Having built one by myself, I can easily see how this unlimited renewable energy source is quickly being adopted by cities worldwide.

For you guys who are still thinking about adopting the solar technology, I hope the information shared in this guide will prove to be useful. I took a small leap of faith, and just a small solar setup has reduced my bills... Very satisfying, and you can do the same too.

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SECTION AWHAT SOLAR ELECTRICITY? IS IT GOOD ENOUGH? The core technology behind solar power systems (and solar panels) is Photovoltaic (PV) cells which converts light into usable electricity. While some people may think that this is some kind of advanced rocket science thing, it really has been around since the mid-1800s.

But back then, as you might have guessed, solar technology is just way too inefficient to be useful. It has only become mainstream lately with the progress in technology. But is it really good enough? Personally, I will say yes - Solar panels are affordable these days, and you will get free electricity as long as the sun is shining. What is so bad about that!??

BUSTING THE MYTHSThere are so many objections whenever it comes to solar energy - It is expensive, it does not produce enough power, and it breaks easily. To smash some of those myths:

If you are still not sure about solar technology, check out the Solar Impulse - Solar energy is already mature enough to power an airplane. Personally, I think that solar power is the next game changer. So much that electricity might even become free one day with it.

What do we need to build a solar energy system? Will it cost a bomb? Do we need to know how to build a rocket? No worries, solar systems are actually pretty simple. When it comes to the raw basic components, there are only 4 of them:

TYPES OF SOLAR PANELSThe fabled technology that turns light into power. While most people only know them as "one kind of solar panel", there are currently 3 common types of solar panels.

POLYCRYSTALLINE SOLAR PANELSThe slightly newer technology, where solar cells are made with a



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large block of many crystals instead of one continuous piece. This results in less wastage, and thus less expensive. While it is generally less efficient, technology is quickly catching up and poly-crystal solar panels are quickly becoming the "cheaper better" technology.

AMORPHOUS SOLAR PANELSThis is the youngest technology among the three, and it is basically a thin layer of silicon over metal or glass. The thin film solar panel is the cheapest to manufacture, flexible, ultra-portable, but also the least efficient.

TYPES OF BATTERIESSolar panels will only work when there is the sun, and thus we need batteries to store energy for the night. I am sure we are all already familiar with AA and AAA batteries. But for solar systems, we use the slightly bigger batteries.

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