

Solar success stories:

Getting more power and savings from solar



Meet Rafael and Jake, two homeowners keeping their solar systems working well—and their bills low. Their solar stories show that it takes more than good technology to save money—it **also takes simple daily habits.**

Rafael's story:

Habits make a big difference

Rafael's solar journey began in 2020, when he bought a home in Fresno with solar panels already installed.

At first, Rafael's family used more power because they thought solar would cover it all, so his bills did not change as much as he expected. Then Rafael and his family started making small changes, like turning off lights and running appliances at certain times during the day, paying close attention to when solar energy is available. After that, the savings started to show. Within a year, those changes helped him save an additional \$1,000 per year.

“Don't just focus on solar panels—focus on your energy usage behavior,” Rafael says.

Rafael's solar saving tips:

Avoid high-energy tasks at night. Maximize using solar energy during daylight hours if you don't have battery storage.

Create a home energy saving plan so everyone can participate in saving. Monitor energy usage through [PG&E's My Account](#) to find times to minimize using energy from the grid.

Make energy efficient home upgrades, like adding blinds to keep your home cool or adding energy-efficient appliances.



Jake's story:

Taking care of your system pays off

Jake has been using solar power for his Pleasanton home for more than 15 years. Jake got his money back faster than he expected. His system paid for itself in five years, before the typical nine years. He learned that regular care keeps his system working well and producing maximum solar power. He has his solar panels cleaned when needed and checks his solar company's tool to monitor his system's output. Over the years, Jake has kept his energy use low to save more. His story shows that solar panels can last a long time when people take care of them.

His plan today is simple:

Clean panels as needed, when you notice unexpected changes in solar production.

Keep an eye on system performance, so you can fix problems early.



“Most problems I've seen come from not monitoring the solar system performance.”

Solar tips:

Getting more solar power and savings



- 1 Check your system often:** Use [PG&E's Solar Summary Tool](#) to help monitor your energy use and solar power sent to the grid. Do not wait for a big bill to check how your system is doing. Learn how much power your system sends to the grid and look for more ways to use more of that solar energy at home.
- 2 Use more power during the day:** When you can, run appliances and charge EVs while your solar panels are making power.
- 3 Keep care simple:** Solar systems are easy to maintain. Clean the panels regularly, watch their performance, and address issues early.
- 4 Think about battery storage:** Batteries let you use extra solar energy after dark. They can also give you backup power during outages.
- 5 Thinking about an all-electric home?** Calculate product costs and savings with [PG&E's Clean Energy Calculator](#).
- 6 Get everyone involved:** Work with family or housemates to avoid wasting energy. Make small energy-efficient changes such as running full loads of laundry and dishes.
- 7 Keep learning:** Know how to use your solar tools—[PG&E's Solar Summary Tool](#)—and your solar company's tools to track total solar production. Plus, know your billing plan—[Solar Billing Plan](#) or [Net Energy Metering \(NEM\)](#)—to manage home energy usage.

Final words:

Solar savings start with active ownership

The key is to keep the household involved and build smart habits that help maximize the use of solar power and minimize the use of power from the grid. Whether you are new to solar or have used it for years, small changes can make a big difference. When you pay attention to your system, you can save money for years to come.

PG&E tools & resources

Home Energy Check-Up

Take a free home energy audit and get personalized tips to help maximize energy savings.

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All-electric home

Explore how to boost your home's energy efficiency with electric appliances.

[Learn more >>](#)

Solar summary tool

Monitor your energy usage monthly and see when you can use more of your solar energy

[Learn more >>](#)

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