

Unplugged & off the grid

Tips & tricks for surviving load shedding

Load shedding has caused havoc for many South Africans over the past few months and many of us are looking towards solutions for the problem, which is said to become even worse during winter when the country's power needs increase.

Whether you're looking for extra security solutions, heating and solar alternatives or simply cooking with gas, we have sourced a range of products and expert advice, tips & ideas.

Nothing beats a warm fire, hot bath & your favourite meal - don't be left cold & hungry during load shedding



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BRAAIS, PIZZA OVENS, WOOD BURNING STOVES & FIREPLACES
We all know how frustrating it is when load shedding falls in the time you usually prepare dinner for your family. Consider alternatives - there is a wide range of braais, pizza ovens, gas stoves and wood burning stoves/fireplaces available to you. Closed wood burning stoves are safe, efficient and the most economical way of heating your home - plus you can cook in them too! Selecting a quality product is worth the time, effort and money, as it will be used in your home for social events and everyday cooking and heating for years to come. Consider it an investment that will increase the value of your property and be a huge selling point.

GAS APPLIANCES
Gas appliances have been around for many years and have seen a boom in recent years. As a cheaper alternative to using electrical appliances, gas appliances can be used every day of the year, blackout or not. From stoves to geysers, heaters and even fridges and freezers, gas appliances keep going when the power goes out.

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SECURITY
When nights sink into complete darkness, it creates the perfect scenario for criminal activity. The vast majority of security solutions rely on electricity - whether it is surveillance cameras, electric fences or automatic gates. While most have some form of back-up battery that kicks in when the electricity is cut, constant power failures can quickly reduce a battery's lifespan. A slightly more expensive battery will last longer than the batteries used in most installations as these have a better discharge/recharge lifespan. Another alternative is to invest in multiple power packs, each with their own battery backup, as these are capable of spreading the load from the security devices. There are a variety of backup options available to choose from, including power packs with backup

batteries, uninterrupted power supply (UPS), generators, inverters and more. To secure your property perimeter and home during blackouts, look to include manual security gates & doors as well as burglar bars. Design your security system according to your specific needs.

GENERATORS, BATTERY BACK-UP & UPS

Having a generator seems all the rage these days. These devices run on either diesel or petrol, and can be used to power all the necessary appliances in your home.

Homeowners need to be aware of the dangers of using petrol generators outside of recommended guidelines. Some extra tips

when using a generator:

- Never operate a generator within a built structure such as a home, shed, garage, or even a carport. The generator needs to be sited at least 3 meters away from any structure, with the exhaust pointing in the opposite direction.
- It is recommended that you use a generator with a safety protection class of IP 54
- When using a petrol generator in windy conditions, ensure that the wind direction does not blow toxic fumes into built structures.
- Only use SABS-approved power cable extensions from a generator.
- To prevent electrical shock, support generator cords off the ground.
- Do not store petrol in the house and do not add petrol to the generator whilst it is running.

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UPS is an alternative option to a generator, to run multiple devices in your home at once. Similar to an inverter, these devices provide you with an uninterrupted power supply, plugging in directly to your TV or computer, so when the power goes out, these devices stay on. They come in a variety of sizes.

LIGHTING

An emergency light or two in your home could be a huge stress beater. Emergency lights charge in the wall when the power is on and switch on immediately when the power goes off. The LED bulbs in these lights are extremely energy efficient, which means these lights can last for hours. They are extremely bright and easily light up a large room, so you can go about your business as usual. Solar lamps & jars put outside in the garden can be taken inside to give light when the electricity is out. Remember candle light was the only option for centuries before the invention of electricity. They're cheap, cheerful and create a lovely ambience. They last for hours on end and can be carried around with you. Battery operated candles capture the elegance of wax candles, yet are flameless, safe & rechargeable.

SOLAR

Long considered one of the most accessible forms of renewable energy, solar power has increased in popularity over recent years. With our sunny weather in SA, it's fast becoming an alternative energy solution of choice for companies and consumers alike. These days, you can use solar power for just about everything, from lighting to your geyser or entertainment centre. Solar energy can give you power when you need it most. It also adds value to your property and will save you money on your Eskom bill in the longer term.



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TIPS & TRICKS

Follow these simple tips to save electricity:

- Turn off air conditioners, geysers & pool pumps
- Turn off anything that consumes standby energy (TV's, DVD players, cell phone chargers, etc.)
- Switch to CFL and LED lights
- Run appliances late at night, or early in the morning
- Use your computers in energy saving mode

Stay up to date with load shedding schedules and plan accordingly:

- Make sure your cellphone is charged – solar chargers are available
- Put fuel in your car – petrol stations cannot pump petrol during power outages
- ATM's do not operate during outages so make sure you have enough cash
- Keep a torch in your car/home/at your bedside
- Have temporary lighting available and charged
- Stock up on firewood
- Have adequate security to keep your home & your family safe
- Get Gas
- Go Solar
- Check with your insurance provider that you have adequate cover for damage to appliances caused by power surges and burglaries during blackouts

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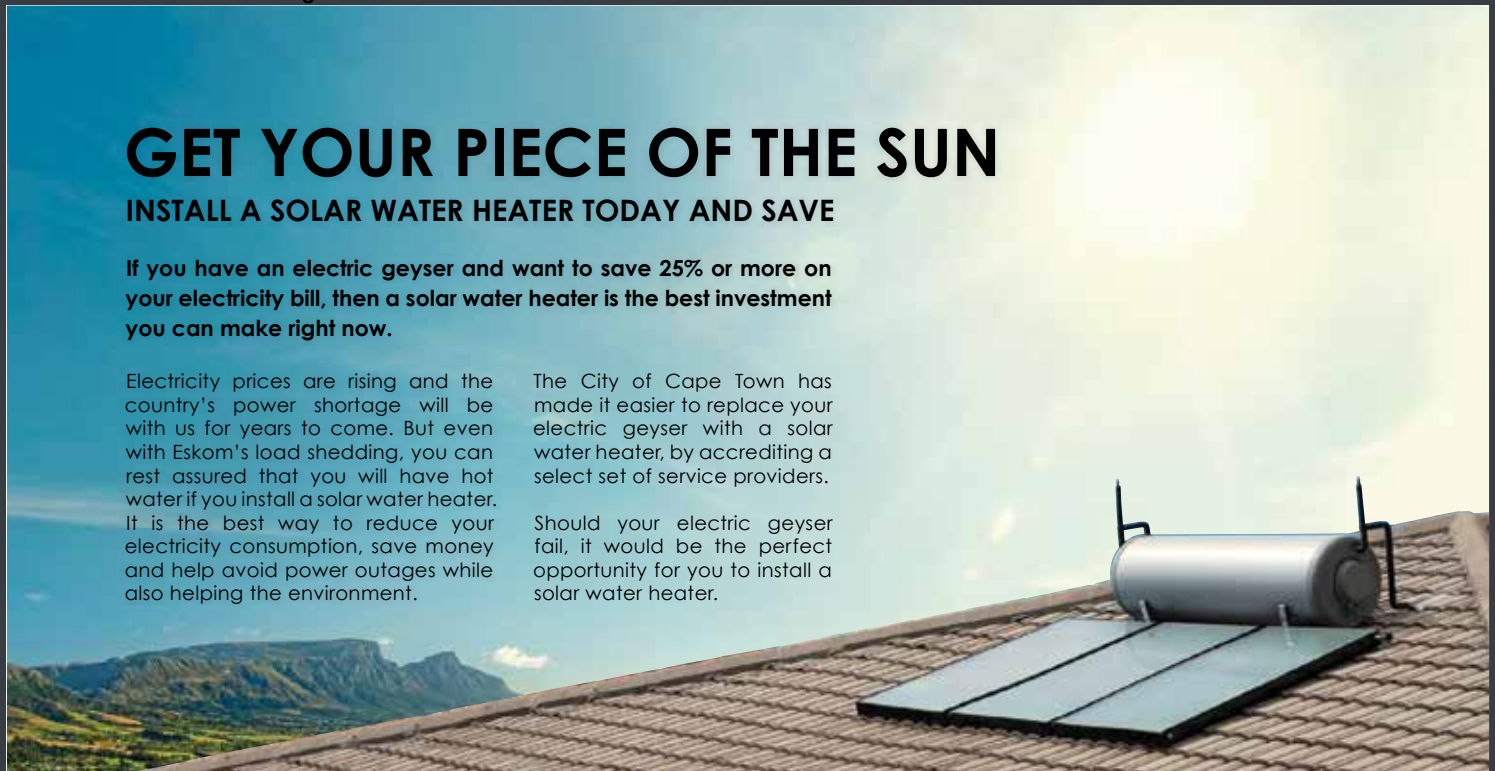
INSTALL A SOLAR WATER HEATER TODAY AND SAVE

If you have an electric geyser and want to save 25% or more on your electricity bill, then a solar water heater is the best investment you can make right now.

Electricity prices are rising and the country's power shortage will be with us for years to come. But even with Eskom's load shedding, you can rest assured that you will have hot water if you install a solar water heater. It is the best way to reduce your electricity consumption, save money and help avoid power outages while also helping the environment.

The City of Cape Town has made it easier to replace your electric geyser with a solar water heater, by accrediting a select set of service providers.

Should your electric geyser fail, it would be the perfect opportunity for you to install a solar water heater.



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