

# Passive Solar Design for the Home

Your home's windows, walls, and floors can be designed to collect, store, and distribute solar energy in the form of heat in the winter and reject solar heat in the summer. This is called passive solar design or climatic design because, unlike active solar heating systems, it doesn't involve the use of mechanical and electrical devices, such as pumps, fans or electrical controls to move the solar heat.

To understand how passive solar design works, you first need to understand how heat moves.

## Heat-Movement Physics

As a fundamental law, heat moves from warmer materials to cooler ones until

there is no longer a temperature difference between the two. A passive solar building makes use of this law through three heat-movement mechanisms—conduction, convection, and radiation—to distribute heat throughout the living space.

Conduction is the way heat moves through materials, traveling from molecule to molecule. Heat causes molecules close to the heat source to vibrate vigorously, and these vibrations spread to neighboring molecules, thus transferring heat energy. For example, a spoon placed into a hot cup of coffee conducts heat through its handle and into the hand that grasps it.

Convection is the way heat circulates



This house in North Carolina features a passive solar design.



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# The Complete Passive Solar Home

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## **The Complete Passive Solar Home:**

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