

BEST NEW WAYS TO

Spend WISELY

Practical ideas that will help you save more and get better value for your dollar.



BEST TIP FOR ADVERTISING YOUR HOME SALE

“One of the things younger buyers say is important to them is that the house has great cell coverage.”

RICHARD DAVIDSON, CEO of Century 21 Real Estate, in an interview with Money.com

BEST BACKUP TO HELP YOU TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

You've done this: You feel weird, so you Google your symptoms—and diagnose yourself with something awful. A new web tool called Isabel, at symptomchecker.isabel-healthcare.com, can give

you a clearer view. Based on a tool already used by more than 100 U.S. hospitals and doctors' offices, Isabel asks you to input your symptoms, and then draws on medical research to produce a list of possible conditions. (Its database is far deeper than other popular symptom checkers.) Isabel understands lay-

man's terms like "stomach ache" and tells you which diagnoses are common vs. rare. Isabel can't replace your doctor, says founder Jason Maude. But the site can help you pose better questions about tests and treatments—crucial now that you're being asked to shoulder more of your health care costs.

BEST TREND FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY

HERE COMES CHEAP HOME SOLAR

Thanks to better manufacturing methods, the cost of residential solar panels has fallen about 7% per year since 2000, says the Department of Energy. And that's not the only thing making solar look like a brighter choice.

➔ **BETTER FINANCING OPTIONS:** Low-interest, no-money-down solar loans are now offered by lenders such as Admiral Bank, credit unions, and through major solar-panel sellers like SolarCity. (Energysage.com/solar lists the options.) David Feldman, senior financial analyst for the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, ran the numbers to compare loans to leasing, long the most popular way of going solar. He says a typical system, which might lease for \$168 a month over 20 years, would cost \$136 or less per month with a loan.

➔ **IMPROVED RESALE VALUE:** A study by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory found that homes with owned, not leased, solar panels could sell for almost \$25,000 more than comparable non-solar homes.

BEST RETRO TECH

Bring back dashboard knobs!

For years cars have become more tech-laden, with systems to let you make phone calls, find local pizza joints, or answer email. Which is nice, unless you prefer to keep your focus on driving. Interiors became a maze of numeric keypads and other control points. Ford says its research shows drivers don't use or want all that tech. Now it's retro time. For the 2015 model year Ford Focus, the automaker has eliminated many buttons, and added old-fashioned knobs to systems such as heat and A/C. In the next Fusion, the company is even getting rid of touchscreens.

—BILL SAPORITO, *Time* assistant managing editor, car reviewer at Money.com



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