

Natural Gas Pros and Cons

Natural gas is one of the big three fossil fuels that the world runs on. In recent decades, there has been more of an effort to move away from coal and gas when it comes to providing heat and power as they produce [high levels of pollution](#). The reserves for coal and natural gas are also being swiftly depleted, Natural gas is the obvious choice for replacing them as a [major energy source](#), but there are many pros and cons of natural gas use.

Proponents of both sides, when it comes to talking about the pros and cons of natural gas have a tendency to only stick to isolated facts in promoting their view. The real scientific evaluation of the viability of an energy source comes in seeing both sides together. In order to decide how viable natural gas is for power, you have to consider the [pros and cons of natural gas](#) at the same time.



Pros of Natural Gas

- 1. Produces Less Soot:** Natural gas is always pointed towards when it comes to producing less [pollution](#) than other fossil fuels in its production as its byproducts are in gaseous form. It burns cleaner than gasoline or diesel. It releases 45% less carbon dioxide than coal and 30% less than oil and has therefore less impact on the [environment](#).
- 2. Abundant Supply:** It is abundant and available worldwide. There are over a trillion barrels of natural gas reserves in the US alone that have not been harvested. Just like

oil and coal, natural gas is a finite source that has to be conserved to be a viable power source. In the coming years, many sites are waiting to be discovered.

3. Infrastructure in Place: The technology to produce natural gas already exists as the same is used to harness fossil fuels. The familiarity with the current technology makes it easier for us to harness natural gas in the same way. It is used extensively for power generation and heat.

4. Cheaper: Natural gas vehicles are far more energy efficient, as are other engines powered by it – which makes them cheaper to run. Given that most of the engines in the world of all types are gas based, the cost of converting or replacing them is prohibitive. It is most common used fuel in homes for heating and cooking purposes.

5. Transportation: Natural gas can be easily transported via ships, tankers and pipes. It is lighter and easier to transport in terms of carbon footprint. This makes natural gas a viable option to be used in residential homes. One of the main benefit of natural gas is that it is used to make plastics, chemicals, fertilizers and hydrogen.



Cons of Natural Gas

1. Highly Inflammable: Natural gas is a highly flammable substance that can cause significantly more damage should there be an accident. Natural gas leaks can cause fires or explosions, if not handled carefully. It is colorless, tasteless and odorless and cannot be detected by smell unless an odorant is added to it.

2. Greenhouse Gas Emissions: When natural gas is burnt, it releases carbon-dioxide, monoxide, and other carbon compounds in the atmosphere. These gases transfer carbon from the earth to the atmosphere, thus contributing towards greenhouse effect.

3. Non-Sustainable: Natural gas is non-renewable and will eventually expire one day like other fossil fuels. It is not a sustainable form of energy and is not an answer to ever growing energy crisis problem that this world is facing. The need is to look beyond that and invest heavily in renewable form of technologies.

4. Not Easy to Use: To use natural gas, all the components except methane have to be extracted. This results in several byproducts such as hydrocarbons (ethane, propane, etc.), sulfur, water vapor, carbon dioxide, and even helium and nitrogen.

5. Expensive Pipelines: The infrastructure needed to use natural gas is very expensive as long pipes, specialized tanks, and separate plumbing systems need to be used. Long distance transmission and transportation requires extra cost. Fixing of leaking pipes add to the running cost.

As you can see, nothing is easy when it comes to balancing the pros and cons of natural gas. While it hasn't been as heavily used as other fossil fuels, and therefore there is a greater supply of it – it is also a limited resource. By switching to a heavier demand on that resource, it can become just as depleted as our other fuel reserves. It also has its own downsides when it comes to [environmental damage](#) and pollution. In weighing the main 5 pros and cons of natural gas it is important to remember that the decision that has to be made is one that seeks balance. As a world, we need to relieve our demand on the already strained resources of coal and oil, and natural gas may be the perfect way to do that in the short term. You can't lose sight of the long term impact of increased natural gas use. The pros and cons of natural gas need to always stay at the forefront of any initiative to further advance the development of sustainable and renewable energy sources too.

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