

8 Tips for Smooth Home Buying

First-timers, take notice.

These eight simple suggestions will help you breeze through the buying process.

1. Understand what you can afford

It's exciting to fixate on that gourmet kitchen, but first things first: review your credit report and talk to a lender about getting preapproved for a mortgage.

2. Find an agent that fits your personality

It's a big commitment and an emotional ride. You'll want to pick a pro that's not only skilled but simpatico with you.

3. Be picky but realistic

No house is perfect. Focus on the things that are most important, and let the minor ones go. Try to visualize yourself in the home for the long haul.

4. Factor in all your costs

Your mortgage payment is only the beginning. You also need to factor in closing costs, property tax, Homeowner's Association fees and homeowner's insurance. Not to mention basic upkeep.

5. Leave emotions at the door

Don't get discouraged if you lose out on the first or second house, or if the seller won't come down in price.

6. Practice your poker face

Don't show the seller's agent all your cards if you've fallen in love with a house. Hang back and prepare to negotiate.

7. Get an inspection

It's tempting to forgo the fee associated with getting a home inspected for material defects, but an inspection can save you thousands of dollars in repairs down the road.

8. Think long-term

Is this your starter or forever home? Asking these questions can dictate the type of property you purchase, as well as the mortgage terms that suit you best.



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