

## 10 Steps to Homebuying

### 1. Get your finances in order

Gather pertinent documents and ensure there are no errors on your credit report.

### 2. Connect with the mortgage industry

Research the loan process and find a lender you feel comfortable with who will meet your needs.

### 3. Get a mortgage pre-approval

A pre-approval letter lets you know the loan amount you are approved for and can help when you are ready to place an offer on a home.

### 4. Determine your wants and needs

Create a three-column list of features you want, need and don't want your home to have. Adjust the list as needed.

### 5. Select a qualified REALTOR®

Select a REALTOR® who makes you feel comfortable and is knowledgeable and professional. When meeting with potential REALTORS®, bring a list of questions to ask.

### 6. Start searching for a home

Your REALTOR® can help you search the MLS for homes that meet your criteria. You can also check his or her website or local magazines and newspapers.

### 7. Handle pre-offer tasks

Talk to your REALTOR® about potential scenarios that could occur when you do enter an offer on a home.

### 8. Make an offer

Develop an offer strategy with your REALTOR® that covers important items, such as appraisals, tax values and comparables.

#### 9. Home inspections and other tests

Your REALTOR® can share information with you about which inspections and tests you should consider scheduling.

#### 10. Correct last minute problems

You are on your way to closing. Monitor your real estate transaction so that you can address any potential issues.

### 9 Things Not to Do When Buying a Home

#### 1. Don't make a major purchase

If you will be applying for a mortgage, try not to make any major purchases until after your closing as they can impact your debt-to-income ratio.

#### 2. Don't change jobs unless it's necessary

A consistent job history is helpful when securing financing.

#### 3. Don't let your emotions take over

When looking at home features, needed repairs and points in a contract, try not to make decisions based on emotions.

#### 4. Don't forget to switch utilities

Once you have a contract, call your utility providers to apply for service at your new home. Remember to discontinue services at your old residence.

#### 5. Don't forget to secure hazard insurance.

As soon as possible, secure hazard insurance and verify if other forms of insurance are necessary or required.

#### 6. Don't become besties with the seller

It's perfectly okay to be friendly but refrain from making statements that could impact negotiations or establishing relationships that could impact your judgement.

#### 7. Don't panic if the appraisal comes in low

There are things you and your REALTOR® can do to correct the problem.

#### 8. Don't go it alone

Your REALTOR® is there to track the details of your real estate transaction and assist you throughout the entire process.

#### 9. Don't ignore your lender requirements

Know and complete your lender's requirements, answer their questions and provide necessary paperwork ASAP. Not doing so can jeopardize your closing.

### 8 Homebuying Questions to Ask

#### 1. How can a REALTOR® help me purchase a home?

A REALTOR® is a professional who can provide you with educational resources and information. He or she will walk you through each stage of the home buying process.

#### 2. What types of disclosures are required?

Your REALTOR® can provide you with information about the different types of disclosures sellers are required to give buyers.

#### 3. What types of inspections are standard?

Your REALTOR® can provide you with information about the types of inspections that are standard in your area, how much they cost, who pays for them and how long they take.

4. Is a survey required?

Your REALTOR® can also provide you with information about surveys, such as if they are required and who pays for them.

5. Who performs the title search?

A title search will be needed on the home you wish to purchase to verify that the deed is problem free. Ask who performs title searches and how much they cost.

6. Who acts as the settlement agent?

Ask who acts as the settlement agent and puts together the final paperwork for you to sign to purchase your new home.

7. What is the average total for closing costs?

Be sure to ask about the average cost for closing fees, such as taxes, settlement fees, etc.

8. How long does it take to close on a home?

Ask how long it usually takes to close on a home once the offer has been accepted?

Understanding your local real estate market

Browse

Browse listings on your REALTOR®'s website or the MLS.

Pick Up

Pick up real estate publications that are offered in your area.

Read

Read real estate ads in your local newspapers, magazines and other publications.

## Drive

Take a drive in your desired area and look for homes for sale.

## Adjust

Adjust your wants and needs list if you discover features you like or don't like.

## Mortgages deconstructed: Mortgage info for buyers

Before you reach out to a lender, there are a few things you should know about mortgages. Here's some info to help you make the best lending choice for your future home purchase.

## Pre-Approval

This is a determination your lender will provide that states that you are pre-qualified for a specific loan amount. Your pre-approval letter makes putting an offer in on a home easier.

## Evaluation

A lender will evaluate four areas to determine your mortgage eligibility:

1. Credit report
2. Amount of current monthly credit
3. Income/employment history
4. Financial assets

## Needed documents

To apply for a loan, you will need certain documents, such as:

- Pay stubs
- Tax returns
- Financial statements
- Mortgage statement or current lease

Additional needed items:

- Driver's license
- Social security card
- High school diploma or school transcript (for full-time students)

## Loan types

- Federal Housing Administration (FHA)- A government insured loan
- Conventional- Loans that meet conventional secondary marketplace standards
- VA- Loans for veterans from the Veterans Administration

## 2 Loan Rates

- Adjustable Rate Mortgage (ARM)- The interest rate may fluctuate over the life of the loan
- Fixed Rate Mortgage- Monthly principal and interest payments will remain the same for the life of the loan

## Still have questions?

If you still have questions about applying for a mortgage, we encourage you to visit the Space Coast Association of REALTORS® Business Partner Directory and select a lender to contact. The directory can be found at [SpaceCoastMLS.com](http://SpaceCoastMLS.com).

## 10 Steps before selling your home

### 1. Get pre-approved for a home loan

Find a lender you trust and get a pre-approval letter. Conduct market research to help you as you search for a replacement home.

### 2. Check your mortgage payoff

Contact your lender to find out your current mortgage payoff amount.

### 3. Determine how much your house is worth

Determine your current home's fair market value. Your REALTOR® can provide you with a Comparative Market Analysis to show you recent home sales in your area.

#### 4. Estimate the costs to sell your existing home

Costs associated with selling your home can include: REALTOR® commission, closing costs, taxes, inspection and survey fees.

#### 5. Determine your costs to acquire a new home

Costs associated with moving into your new home can include: moving inspections, loan costs, down payment, inspections, title work and insurance policies.

#### 6. Calculate your estimated proceeds

Will your closing proceeds cover the costs of acquiring your new home? If not, will you have the funds to make up the difference?

#### 7. Make necessary repairs

Make necessary repairs on your home.

#### 8. Get the house ready to show

Create curb appeal by removing clutter, applying fresh coats of paint, organizing storage areas and cleaning windows and appliances.

#### 9. Make your home accessible & comfortable

Get your home show ready and keep it show ready.

#### 10. Find a REALTOR®

Find a REALTOR® who makes you feel comfortable, is professional and knowledgeable, and who provides you with educational resources and information.

#### 10 Biggest buyer turn-offs

##### 1. Odors

The number one turn-off for home seekers is odors, particularly from pets, mildew and cigarettes.

## 2. Pets

Pets can frighten or irritate home seekers so try to remove them during showings.

## 3. Dirty bathrooms

Unclean bathrooms are an instant turn-off for buyers. Clean bathrooms and consider investing in new paint, rugs, towels and shower curtains.

## 4. Dimly lit rooms

Fix dimly lit rooms by replacing under-performing fixtures, adding light fixtures, removing heavy drapes or repainting rooms with colors that reflect light.

## 5. Busy wallpaper

Consider removing busy wallpaper and replacing it with paint. Do not paint over it.

## 6. Damp basements

Fix leaks and check for drainage issues. Underground drains could be blocked, or downspouts could be aimed the wrong way. Check for this the next time it rains.

## 7. Insects

Get rid of any insects that may be in the house.

## 8. Poor curb appeal

Keep the lawn manicured and attend to sagging doors or peeling paint.

## 9. Unkept gutters

Overrun gutters signal to buyers that other upkeep items may not have been attended to.



## 10. Sellers who stay for showings

Buyers feel awkward about viewing spaces or lingering to look at a house's features if the sellers are there.

## 8 Steps to increase curb appeal

### 1. Detach from your home décor.

Disengage yourself from your personal feelings about your home so you can see it the way buyers will. Be objective and accept criticism about potential issues.

### 2. Gauge your own first impression

Walk across the street and take in the view of your home. Is it clean and tidy? What are your home's best exterior features and how can you enhance them? What are your home's worst exterior features and how can you minimize them?

### 3. Take photos of your home

Take photos of your home in color and greyscale during the day and at dusk. View all the photos and see what stands out that you can attend to.

### 4. Reevaluate your lighting

Consider stringing lighting alongside your driveway, sidewalks and around landscaping elements. Add decorative and attractive light fixtures to your front porch.

### 5. Freshen up your backyard

Don't forget to enhance your backyard, especially if it is visible from another street. Look for ways to improve its appearance.

### 6. Remove mold & mildew

Get rid of mold and mildew on your home's exterior, sidewalks, roof and driveway. Pressure wash siding, decks and driveways. Clean windows and gutters and consider painting your home or replacing your front door's hardware.

## 7. Tidy up your yard

Keep sidewalks and driveways clean and stow gardening tools. Mow and edge your lawn regularly. Pull weeds, rake leaves and trim trees.

## 8. Freshen up your front door

Consider repainting or staining your front door. Replace or polish your doorknob hardware.

## Small improvements that sell

### Paint

Paint is one of the most cost-effective and profitable improvements you can make. Paint the inside and outside of your home neutral colors.

### A clean garage

Clean out your garage and paint the exterior white. If your garage is unfinished, install wall board or build storage shelves on the back wall.

### New lighting or flooring

Replace outdated or inefficient light fixtures to update old décor. Install new flooring or refurbish hardwood floors if needed.

### Landscaping

Attractive landscaping can increase the value of a property. Mow the lawn, trim shrubs and plant flower beds or trees. Sweep the patio or deck and decorate with potted plants and flowers.

### Make needed repairs

Before listing, attend to minor repairs and needed maintenance.

## 7 steps to prepare your home for sale

### 1. Conduct a pre-sale walk-through with your REALTOR®

Your REALTOR® can provide advice and suggestions about when to list your home and how much to ask for after conducting a walk-through with you.

### 2. Keep the home clean

A clean home with little clutter can show better. Put personal belongings in storage and install shelf and closet organizers to help minimize clutter.

### 3. Freshen décor

New floor coverings and fresh coats of paint can help to update rooms and improve how they show.

### 4. Refinish wood floors

Refinish wood floors so that potential buyers can see the quality of the flooring.

### 5. Complete needed maintenance

Consider staining the deck, cleaning your gutters and making improvements that show your home is well cared for.

### 6. Enhance curb appeal

Make your home more inviting to potential buyers by tidying up your landscape and planting fresh flowers.

### 7. Re-imagine your entryway

Paint your front door, install new door hardware and purchase a new welcome mat to enhance your entryway.