

House Hunter's Guide

Things to Consider

Consider taking a notebook to sketch the layout of the house or jot down some of these answers. Be sure to label each page with the address. Or use your phone to capture your favorite things about each house. The more you share with your realtor, the better they can help you.

Exterior:

- **Style** - Choose one or two styles; it will eliminate some of the stress.
- **Number of Stories? Age of home?**
- **Landscaping** - Is it beautiful? Will it be easy or hard to do? How much to mow?
- **Pool or spa** - Do you want one? Is it clean and in good repair?
- **Porches and decks** - Do you want one? Size? Does it look to be in good repair?
- **Garage and parking** - 1 or 2 cars? Boat or trailer? Access to back yard?
- **How close are the homes** - Side to side? Front or back? At the street? Large lot?
- **Condition of the home** - What is your impression of the floors & interior/exterior walls?

Interior:

- **Bedrooms** - when you find a home with the size and number you want, check the listing for the size and use that as a guide for future homes.
- **Bathrooms**- How many? Is the master bath updated? Does it have 1 or 2 sinks?
- **Size of Kitchen** - Small? Medium? Large? Layout? With an island?
- **Appliances** - How new do they look? Are they clean?
- **Closet and storage space** - Do you need walk-in closets or traditional sizes?
- **Floor plan** - Open concept or traditional room divisions?
Large windows? Good natural light? Good overhead lighting?
- **Noise levels** - Homes open to the upstairs and with few walls are noisier.
- **Stairways** - Easy to climb? Open or walled in? Turns? Does it feel tight?
Is there a handrail?
- **Outlets** - How many are in each room? Today's electronics demand more.
Don't forget: Homes can be customized by remodeling.

If you are seriously considering a home, ask your realtor some of these questions to help you understand the housing market. They may not know the answers because they deal with hundreds of houses, but are willing to find out for you.

- What do you like about the home?
- Do you have any concerns about this home?

- Is the price right?
- How long has this home been on the market?
- How quickly do you think this home will sell?
- Does this home have an offer deadline?
- How long have the current owners owned the home?
- Why is the home for sale? Any known disclosures or repairs needed?
- How old is the roof? * If a composition roof sparkles, it's typically showing wear.
- What type of heating and cooling systems are in place?
- How old is the electrical and plumbing? * It is often the age of the house.
- Can you see a copy of the current owner's utilities?
- Is there a homeowner's association with fees? How much? What are the rules?
- Where is it in the flood plain? Has the house ever flooded? What about the neighborhood?

Research the neighborhood

Take few minutes before or after your home tour to check out the neighborhood.

- How does the neighborhood feel? Is it bustling or quiet?
- Are restaurants, grocery stores, gas stations, and shopping close?
- What are the schools like - check their ratings. Even if you don't have school age children, better rated schools makes it easier to sell later.
- You can check crime indicators for the zip code or neighborhood.

Tips for Buying

- **Always use a real estate agent.** It reduces your stress. They will guide you through the process and help you negotiate.
- Start the house hunting process 3-6 months early. This gives you time to check out locations and generate your "must haves" list. The more you can be precise about what you want, the better your realtor can help. (Remember: realtors aren't in charge of what houses are currently on the market and depending on when and where you look, different places are available.)
- Always stay within your budget.
- Remember to calculate down payment (20%) and closing costs (5%) as well as actual moving costs which can be a surprise when it all adds up.
- Even if you buy a house for cash, always get **homeowners insurance** that starts on the first day you own the house.
- **Have an inspection** completed to check for the safety and durability of your home.
- Be willing to walk away if the deal isn't right for you. There will be another house that better meets your needs; try to be patient even if your time is running out. Better to make short term living arrangements than allow yourself be trapped in a bad investment.

House Hunter's Checklist

Exterior

| | Address 1: | Address 2: | Address 3: | Address 4: |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Architectural Style | | | | |
| # of Stories? Age? | | | | |
| Landscaping | | | | |
| Pool or spa | | | | |
| Porches / Decks | | | | |
| Garage / Parking | | | | |
| Close to Homes | | | | |
| Condition | | | | |

Interior

| | Address 1 | Address 2 | Address 3 | Address 4 |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Bedrooms | | | | |
| Bathrooms | | | | |
| Kitchen | | | | |
| Appliances | | | | |
| Closet/storage | | | | |
| Floor Plan | | | | |
| Noise Level | | | | |
| Stairway | | | | |
| Outlets | | | | |

Rooms** - when you find a home with the size and number you want, check the listing for the size and use that as a guide for future homes. *Don't forget:** Homes can be customized by remodeling.

House Hunter's Checklist

Exterior

| | Address 1: | Address 2: | Address 3: | Address 4: |
|-----------------------|---|------------|------------|------------|
| | 1234 Main St The Woodlands | | | |
| Architectural Style | Modern | | | |
| # of Stories? Age? | 2- master up | | | |
| Landscaping | Easy, big lot | | | |
| Pool or spa | None | | | |
| Porches / Decks | Covered porch w/ outdoor Kitchen | | | |
| Garage / Parking | 2 car - extra large Back yard access | | | |
| Close to Homes | Large lot- lots of space | | | |
| Condition | Well-kept | | | |

Interior

| | Address 1 | Address 2 | Address 3 | Address 4 |
|----------------|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Bedrooms | 4 large | | | |
| Bathrooms | 2.5 large, master updated | | | |
| Kitchen | Updated, XLarge, v + | | | |
| Appliances | Look new | | | |
| Closet/storage | Great / walk-in | | | |
| Floor Plan | Good | | | |
| Noise Level | DK | | | |
| Stairway | Love it - Curved | | | |
| Outlets | Good - every 6 ft | | | |

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