



## A Homebuyers Checklist

Buying a home is one of life's most important decisions and exciting adventures. But there's much more to finding the right property than picking out the perfect floor plan. Even experienced buyers can find the process complex and a little overwhelming. That's why the time you spend preparing before you start your search can be the best investment you make in your new home.

It's important to understand the buying process, the decisions you will have to make, and undoubtedly the tradeoffs along your path to homeownership. So here are some things to keep in mind before and during your search:

**Do the math on your purchasing power:** Before you start cruising any neighborhoods for open houses, you need to know which driveways you can financially afford to pull into. Meet with a lender who will

help you determine which type of financing (fixed rate, adjustable, etc.) will work best for your situation and how big of a loan you can comfortably qualify for with each type of available financing. Also, getting pre-approved can

put you in a much stronger negotiating position because it shows the seller that you are a committed buyer, financially capable of buying the property and more likely to close on it.

**Find the right agent:** Your real estate agent will be your partner in your search, so it's important to have confidence in him or her by doing your research. Look for a strong, seasoned professional REALTOR<sup>®</sup> with experience and

success in the neighborhoods you're considering. Ask friends and family for agent referrals, and don't be afraid to interview more than one agent to compare experience before making your decision.

**Start surfing:** One of the most important tools for your house hunt can be found right in your own home or office - the Internet. Many homes are listed for sale on the Internet because real estate agents know that most people turn to

the Web first when looking for a new home. With just a few clicks of a mouse, you can see photos, take virtual tours

and map out locations for homes that contain features you are looking for. A good place to start is [www.ColoradoHomes.com](http://www.ColoradoHomes.com). You can register for e-mail alerts to have information about available homes sent to you

and your agent so that

I can help you investigate to ensure the homes are right for you.

**Location, Location, Location:** One can make a list of pros and cons for nearly every home in every neighborhood. That's why it's important to narrow your search before you start touring every house in town. Decide which

neighborhoods work best for you, your family, your activities and your work commute. Check out school districts, shopping and dining, public transportation, recreational areas and any other facts that are important to you.

**List your priorities and prepare to compromise:** The dream home you have pictured in your mind might not exist in reality, or at least not in your neighborhood or price range. It may be necessary to sacrifice that extra large bathtub

or redwood deck in order to get the home located near your child's school that has the four bedrooms you require. Make a list of the features you would like versus ones you can't live without. Then, bring your list with you as you

tour homes to keep score.

**Would you like french doors with that?** Once you've found a home you like, consider the costs of upgrades, repairs or remodels and factor those into your short or long term budgets and be certain to investigate with the local

planning entities whether or not those upgrades are even possible.

With a little planning up front you will be well on your way to enjoying your new home before you know it.