**8 Tips to Guide Your Home Search**

1. **Research before you look.**  Decide what features you most want to have in a home, what neighbors you prefer, and how much you’d be willing to spend each month on housing.
2. **Be realistic**. It’s OK to be picky, but don’t be unrealistic with your expectations. There’s no such thing as a perfect home. Use your priorities as a guide to evaluate property.
3. **Get your finances in order**. Review your credit report and be sure you have enough money to cover your down payment and closing costs. Then, talk to a lender and get prequalified for a mortgage. This will save you the heartache later of falling in love with a house you can’t afford.
4. **Don’t ask too many people for opinions**. It will drive you crazy. Select one or two people to turn to if you feel you need a second opinion, but be ready to make the final decision on your own.
5. **Decide your moving timeline**. When is your lease up? Are you allowed to sublet? How tight is the rental market in your area? All of these factor s will help you determine when you should move?
6. **Think long term**. Are you looking for a starter house with plans to move up in a few years , or do you hope to stay in this home for a longer period of time? This decision may dictate what type of home you’ll buy as well as the type of mortgage terms that will best suit you.
7. **Insist on a home inspection.** If possible, get a warranty from the seller to cover defects for one year.
8. **Get help from a REALTOR**. Hire a real estate professional who specializes in buyer representation. Unlike a listing agent, whose first duty is to the seller, a buyer’s representative is working only for you. Buyer’s reps are usually paid a portion of the seller’s commission payment.

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