

The Dream Home Checklist

These six items will help you prioritize the features, elements, and amenities you're looking for in your new home. There are some that you must have, and there are some that you would like have if price allows, and there are probably some on the checklist that you hadn't even thought about until now.

1. Price

Knowing ahead of time how much you can afford and what you are able to spend immediately enables us to narrow down the vast market of homes to about 10 percent of what's currently on the market.

2. Type of property

Are you looking for a house, town home, condo, co-op, or multi-unit home?

3. Condition of property

New or old? How much sweat equity do you want to put into the property? Do you want to pay a little less and invest time and money to improve the house yourself, or do you want to buy a house that's ready to move into?

4. Must-haves

The must-have is essential in your new home. For example: "We have a newborn baby, so we must have a two-bedroom house."

5. Nice-to-haves

A nice-to-have may get nixed out of the mix if price becomes an issue. For example: "We have a newborn baby, so we would like to have a three-bedroom house to have an extra room for guests or for a home office." That third bedroom is not a must-have and you could (or may have to) live without it to get into a house you can afford.

Determining nice-to-haves vs. should-haves

Knowing your must-haves vs. should-haves is a key element to house shopping. It will help us sort through all the properties on the market quickly and easily, helping us focus on those that are in your price range and worth your time and energy to view and inspect.

Of course you will amend your must-haves and nice-to-haves. As you begin to preview houses, you will have to make some compromises on your list. Separating your must-haves from your nice-to-haves lets you decide where you can compromise to meet your budget.

6. Location

Where do you want to live? If you're like most home buyers, you have a basic idea of where you want to live. Proximity to family, friends and/or work plays a significant part in where you ultimately want to put down roots. However, there is a lot of leeway within these parameters – neighborhoods and communities within the same distance often vary quite a lot.

About the Author



Michael Corbett is Trulia's real estate and lifestyle expert. He hosts NBC's EXTRA's Mansions and Millionaires. In addition to his regular segments on ABC's The View and Fox News, he is a national best selling author with three critically acclaimed real estate books: Find It, Fix It, FLIP IT!; Ready, Set, SOLD! and Before You BUY!

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Price

Condition of Property

Must-Haves

Bedrooms:

Bathrooms:

Square Footage:

Garage Spaces:

Amenities:

Central Heating and Air:

Other:

Kitchen:

Gourmet:

Eat-in:

Other:

Outdoor Space:

Balcony:

Backyard:

Should-Haves

Home Office Space:

Number of Stories:

Architectural Style:

Lot Size:

Backyard Features:

Pool:

Garden:

Space to Build:

Space for Children to Play:

Finished Basement or Attic:

Hardwood Floors:

Wood-burning Fireplace:

Location

Proximity to:

Job

Commuter - Driving:

Commuter - Public Transportation:

Commuter - Walking:

Schools:

Shopping:

Entertainment:

Family Entertainment:

Singles/Nightlife:

Recreation:

Nearby Freeways:

Walking Distance to Restaurants:

Low Crime Rate:

Minimal Traffic