

10 things to take the trauma out of homebuying

1. **Find a real estate agent that you're comfortable with.** Homebuying is not only a big financial commitment, but also an emotional one. It's critical that the agent you chose is both skilled and a good fit with your personality.
2. **Remember, there's no "right" time to buy, any more than there's a right time to sell.** If you find a home now, don't try to second-guess the interest rates or the housing market by waiting. Changes don't usually occur fast enough to make that much difference in price, and a good home won't stay on the market long.
3. **Don't ask for too many opinions.** It's natural to want reassurance for such a big decision, but too many ideas will make it much harder to make a decision.
4. **Accept that no house is ever perfect.** Focus in on the things that are most important to you and let the minor ones go.
5. **Don't try to be a killer negotiator.** Negotiation is definitely a part of the real estate process, but trying to "win" by getting an extra-low price may lose you the home you love.
6. **Remember your home doesn't exist in a vacuum.** Don't get so caught up in the physical aspects of the house itself—room size, kitchen—that you forget such issues as amenities, noise level, etc., that have a big impact on what it's like to live in your new home.
7. **Don't wait until you've found a home and made an offer to get approved for a mortgage,** investigate insurance availability, and consider a schedule for moving. Presenting an offer contingent on a lot of unresolved issues will make your bid much less attractive to sellers.
8. **Factor in maintenance and repair costs in your post-home buying budget.** Even if you buy a new home, there will be some costs. Don't leave yourself short and let your home deteriorate.
9. **Accept that a little buyer's remorse is inevitable and will probably pass.** Buying a home, especially for the first time, is a big commitment, but it also yields big benefits.
10. **Choose a home first because you love it, then think about appreciation.** Home values fluctuate in most areas every 3-5 years. A home's most important role is as a comfortable, safe place to live.