

YOUR NEW HOME

Unlike other big investments, your new house is one you're going to have to live in. Ideally, you'll be searching for a house to move into because you want to. You'll be enthusiastic and clear-headed, in prime spirits for undertaking the hunt, finding the best deal and taking pleasure in your prize.

You may, however, be looking for a house in response to big changes that make the hunt more challenging and less enjoyable. A new job, new baby or new marriage may have you looking for a new home when what you really want is to sit down in a comfortable, familiar place and get used to the changes.

You'll be best able to avoid stress and confusion if you already know something about the process of getting a new home and can anticipate some of the likely difficulties.

The Hunt

Begin the hunt from a position of power. Know what you want. Make a list of the features you would like the new house to have. This list will help you keep track of your choices and decisions so you won't have to struggle through them a second time. Couples will find that the list will help focus and organize their discussions.

Then compare mortgage rates. When you've selected the financial institution with which you want to deal, visit them and find out how much of a mortgage they will allow you. With this decided, you can then determine your price range.

Moves often come in response to

big changes. If there is a new job, or a new baby, or you are soon to be married, try to wait until things are more stable. If you must move immediately, try to make the hunt as simple as possible.

If you are not in a rush to move or sell, shop on your own through the newspaper and personal contacts. If time is of the essence, you will probably want to work with a real estate agent. They will be able to screen houses for you according to your price range and the type of house you want. If you've called ahead, they may even have a number of likely houses ready to show you when you arrive.



Reduce your stress by prioritizing your house projects.

Before you put in an offer on a house, have an appraiser assess it to make sure it is a sound investment. You will want to visit the house more than once. Each time, try to go with an even more critical eye. Take into consideration such special needs as radon or well testing for the house, and include them in your offer. State in your offer that, if the test results are unacceptable, the offer is void. A compromise will have to be worked out if you still want the house after the tests. As with any contractual agreement, you are well advised to have a lawyer review the offer for you. Expensive errors can be avoided this way.

Help On The Hunt

Any assistance you can get from people in the house building and selling business will be helpful. But remember, many of the people you will deal with will be trying to sell you something. Get second opinions and, as much as possible, don't rush your decision.

Preparing To Move

Work out a long range, step-by-step plan for preparing to leave your old apartment or house, and for preparing the new residence for occupancy. Moving to a new house is a major undertaking. After you find a home, a comprehensive plan will help you coordinate your efforts at your old residence with whatever work you will want to have done on the new house before you've moved in.