



5 SIGNS

A HOME IS THE RIGHT FIT

Room for change – Space forecast

Finding a home that's the right fit requires you to put on your visionary hat. Purchasing a home that's too big or small can be a costly mistake that's hard to undo.

To make sure you properly assess your prospective home, develop a space forecast for your housing needs over the next 7-10 years (the time it normally takes to maximize the benefits of ownership).

Here's a short list of a few factors to consider:

- marriage or moving in together
- having or adopting kids and animals
- sending kids off to college or to their own separate households
- adult kids or family members that may need to move in

Maintenance that won't break you

The handling costs of owning a home can range from minimal to massive. They can also very drastically change based on a home's region, condition, original construction date and other factors.

Before you buy, talk to your local real estate expert about the average maintenance costs of homes in your neighborhoods of interest. Your agent can offer special local insight to prevent you from drowning in maintenance costs you didn't anticipate.

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Times Have Changed

Once upon a time, the common advice of real estate experts and the goal of home buyers was to buy as 'much' home as you could qualify for, as soon as possible – even if you didn't need the space.

Today's smartest buyers know that “property fit” is about more than the most obvious factors like price and simple square footage.

Repairs you *really* want to tackle

If purchasing an existing home, chances are you're going to want to make a few adjustments.

After you're done touring a property and brainstorming improvements, do little extra research. Get firm estimates of the time, effort, and dollars involved in turning your potential home into your dream space.

Also, ask your agent about home warranties that can minimize your exposure to future repair costs.

Lifestyle friendly fees

Whether you're buying a single-family home or an apartment-style condo, ownership association fees have become much more common. And while most balk at the idea of the extra monthly costs, these fees can be a great investment if you shop correctly.

The key: Invest in benefits that have value to you.

Example: If you hate routine lawn maintenance, a monthly fee could be a small price to pay for a lot of peace of mind.

Commute compatibility

Your commute seems like an obvious consideration when making a home purchase, but be sure you don't stop at your ride to work. Factor in other places you frequent like schools, the grocery store, and other important lifestyle amenities.

To find out what's close to your prospective property and check its walkability score, visit Trulia.com and enter your property's address for an up-to-date look at important points of interest nearby.