



## First Time Home Buyer? Don'T Go In Blind

*An experienced real estate agent offers a blueprint for buying a home.*

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When deciding whether to make the leap from renting to owning a home, it can be a very stressful decision. On one hand, you have the comfort of simply renting a space and having no responsibility for its upkeep or future sale. Plus, you have the freedom to move at the drop of a hat. On the other hand, you're making an investment into your future and planting roots in a specific area. Many homebuyers go through this daunting process blind and are lucky to get a realtor that will walk them through the process.

Kyle Jamicich, [associate broker for Coldwell Banker](#), often works with first-time homebuyers and has advised his clients on just about everything. He shared his tips for making the home-buying process as stress-free as possible with ESTATENVY.

Get a lender, then a realtor.

Jamicich says that most first-time homebuyers don't necessarily understand the order of operations in real estate. "Many folks don't understand that they need to get a lender involved prior to reaching out to a realtor and that there's going to be an attorney involved at some point." Your realtor often will have recommendations for mortgage brokers and attorneys, but it's important to know the key players going in.

Get your financials in order.

The real first step is getting preapproved. Work with a mortgage broker to determine how much home you can afford, making sure to factor in everything from a down payment and monthly assessments to annual taxes and closing costs.

"Most of my clients are only concerned with what neighborhood they want to live in and how much they have in the bank – oftentimes, they overestimate how much money they actually have," said Jamicich. "I would say that half of my first-time buyers don't even know closing costs exist."

Do the math right away with your mortgage broker to get an accurate assessment of what you can afford and in which neighborhood.

Look beyond the cosmetic.

Jamicich says that a lot of first-time buyers place too much emphasis on modern finishes, location, outdoor space and carpeting. "Many clients get so excited about the possibility of owning a home that they overlook certain important things," he said. "For example, they don't focus on the actual layout of the space or furniture placement and they may realize later that their living space doesn't accommodate their needs."

His philosophy is to immediately point out the flaws in every space, ultimately helping first-time buyers get a sense of what's really important to them. But he's also quick to point out when homebuyers get caught up on things that aren't ultimately a big deal, like the wrong paint colors or a disorganized closet.

Think about the future.

While it's important to figure out if a space will work for you, it's equally important to assess its future value.

"Often, young first-time buyers aren't necessarily thinking about having children right away, much less what school the child will attend," Jamicich said. "It may not apply right now, but it's important for future resales to make sure you're in a good school district and that the layout of your home can accommodate a child. To make a smart investment, you have to care about what the buyer pool will care about."

On average, Jamicich estimates that he shows first-time homebuyers 15 homes before they buy one and he is careful to note that it's a learning process on both sides. Ultimately, it's

important to utilize your realtor to help you ask the right questions so that you make the best decision for you.