

HOME SELLERS GUIDE



**THE KEYS TO YOUR
REAL ESTATE SUCCESS**

**CRYE-LEIKE,
REALTORS®**



Your Guide to Selling Your Home!

Thinking of selling your house can be a daunting task. What should I do to get it ready? What questions should I ask a Realtor? How do I make my house make the best first impression? How should I price it?

That's why the Nashville Home Guys put together this guide to selling your home. We have broken the process down into 8 steps which will take the guess work out of your efforts and will sell your home in the least amount of time!

We think these 8 steps are the keys to making your sale a successful one! If you would like a price opinion on your home, please email with your address and we will get you an idea of your home's market value (Steve@NashvilleHomeGuys.com or Sam@NashvilleHomeGuys.com). If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out, we're here for you.

***NASHVILLE* *HOMEGUYS*.COM**
THE KEYS TO YOUR REAL ESTATE SUCCESS

CRYE-LEIKE,[®]
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Step 1: Find the Right Realtor

Here's how to find a Realtor who's right for you!

Gather referrals

There's a lot of agents out there. So how do you choose? Go ahead and ask your friends for referrals, but don't fall into the trap of picking an agent purely because of rave reviews. The old mantra of location, location, location applies to real estate agents as much as homes.

"You need a Realtor who is experienced in the market you're wanting to sell in. One who is familiar with neighborhood values and area trends that might affect your home sale," offers Affiliate Broker, Steve Miller of the Nashville Home Guys.

The reason is simple: if they've spent time in the area, they'll know how to market your house there.

So a better question to ask your friends than "Know any real estate agents?" is, "Know a real estate agent who's sold any properties in my area in the past few years?"

Test their communication skills

Once you have some potentials, email them or call their office, then sit back and wait. This is your first test of a key component: how responsive will your agent be? Ideally, she should get back to you that same day.

Steve adds, "This is one of the most important financial and emotional decisions a person can make and it is the Realtor's job to make sure they are available. Communication is the key to a successful transaction." Imagine if you've got competing offers on the table, or if some problem comes up with the home inspection. You don't want to wonder where your agent is and whether you'll hear back from her.

Probe their experience

Your initial conversation with a prospective listing agent should be like any job interview: Don't be afraid to ask the tough questions right off the bat. A good agent should know his stats, and any dancing around these numbers could mean he's hiding something. You should ask the following:

- **How long have you been in business?** Aim for Realtors with at least two years of experience, enough time to learn the ropes and finesse their marketing and selling plans. Time (on the job) is money (in your pocket).
- **How many houses did you sell last year?** Look for agents with double-digit sales.
- **What percentage of your listings do you sell?** Ideally you want an agent who has sold an average of 60% to 80%.
- **What is the average list price to actual sell price ratio for your listings?** This can fluctuate by market, but you should still look for high numbers. "This is an important point to know so you can see if the agent is just trying to get your listing with an unrealistic listing price or if his

judgments on price have been vetted in reality. If not, you will be wasting your time until they come back and ask you to drop the price. Probably a Realtor with a 95% ratio of sale price to list price is a good one to consider," Steve says.

Assess their marketing skills

Everyone knows that to sell a house quickly (and get the big bucks) you need to reach as many eyeballs as you can. And the way to suss out an agent's ability to do that is to ask these questions:

- **How will you market my home?** A Realtor should use at least a good brokerage website to showcase your listing, national listing portals such as realtor.com®, and an email subscription list.
- **How will you use social media?** They should use at least Facebook and Twitter to market listings; they get bonus points if they post photos on Instagram.
- **What offline materials do you use?** While most marketing is done online now, your Realtor should still make use of tried-and-true methods such as fliers, yard signs, and brochures, especially at an open house.
- **How much do you spend on advertising?** Advertising costs vary widely by area, but an agent should be able to give you an idea of how much and where they spend their advertising dollars.

Don't shoot for cheap

Finally, don't assume the most inexpensive agent is the one for you. While agents work at different price points and some may take a lower commission, the most solid agents won't jump at the chance to lower their commission rate just to get a listing, because of the experience and expertise they bring to the table. "If lowering commissions is one of the first things you hear from an agent you might want to be careful." Steve goes on, "You need an agent who is going to be your advocate protecting your interests, if they are not protecting their own, how can they protect yours?"



Step 2: List It At The Right Price

Putting a price tag on a home you're trying to sell is a tricky thing. For one, it's your *home*, crammed full of memories, hopes, and dreams—and all that stuff can cloud your thinking and lead you toward the wrong price. There are consequences: Shoot too high, and your home could languish on the market for months and maybe not sell at all. Price it too low and you could bilk yourself out of a whole lot of dough.

Repeat after us: What you paid doesn't matter

You may have a dollar figure in mind—perhaps based on what you paid originally, plus a little extra. Because homes appreciate, right? Maybe yes, maybe no. While a hefty increase in value is nice in theory—and in general, it's expected to be a seller's market this year. "But, the truth is that a house is only worth what the market will pay and sometimes that's not what the owners were thinking," states Steve Miller of the Nashville Home Guys.

Think of it this way: Would you buy a banana for \$1 if those same bananas were on sale down the block for 69 cents? Of course not! And, of course, a home ain't no banana.

No matter what you paid for your home, market values fluctuate—both up and down. This can work for you or against you. But all that matters on the open market is what buyers are willing to pay *now*.

Use all your tools: Comps, AVMs, and your Realtor®

The best way to get a handle on your home's sales price are the prices of similarly sized homes in your neighborhood—otherwise known as “comparables,” or “comps.” For example, if a house near yours with the same square footage and numbers of bedrooms and bathrooms, and in similar condition, sold for \$230,000 within the past three months, you can bet your own price will be in that ballpark.

For a quick snapshot of the value of your home [click on the Sellers section and put in your address](#) and the recent sales of homes in your area will come up. If you would like to stay up to date on a monthly basis [click on the Home Sellers Report](#) and sign up for this great free service from the Nashville Home Guys.

“While these are great for quick looks at value, it is still only a snap shot. It's only when a Realtor can lay their eyes on it and give you their opinion based on the individual characteristics your home has to offer and the overall values of the area,” Miller says. That's why you need your Realtor to visit your home, so they can factor in your home's unique strengths and weaknesses along with comps to come to a better estimate.

Factor in upgrades with a grain (or two) of salt

Yep, you poured \$10,000 into your brand-new chef's kitchen, or \$15,000 to install an in-ground swimming pool. Sweet! So it stands to reason that you'd make that money back when you sell, right? Well, not quite. Surveys by the National Association of Realtors® show that your return on investment for

home improvements depends on what kind of renovation you've pulled off—and how much prospective buyers want it in your area. Refinishing hardwood floors, for instance, will reap a 100% return, paying for itself. Convert a basement to a living area, and you'll recoup only 69% of those costs. The harsh truth: Not everyone is going to fall head over heels with your five-seat built-in hot tub. So do your research and find out what those upgrades will really get you.

Leave some wiggle room

Most buyers love to negotiate when you're trying to sell your house. So it helps when pricing your home to leave some wiggle room to allow a chance to "for the buyer to win one," Steve says. Instead of starting out with the absolute lowest price you can afford to go, add a bit of a cushion. How much? "A good rule of thumb is to round off in \$5,000 increments if you want \$346,000 for your home list it a \$350,000." Steve goes on to say, "This creates a win-win situation for you and the buyer and a smoother transaction will be the result."

Also keep in mind that many first-time buyers may have a hard time coming up with cash for closing in addition to their down payment, even if their finances are good and they're qualified for a loan. Offering to cover closing costs—while sticking to a higher asking price—might help seal the deal.

Price with Internet browsing in mind

Once you find yourself a ballpark price you're happy with, it's time to fine-tune it. Keep shoppers' online search parameters firmly in mind—small differences in your price can spell a big difference in your exposure.

"Home buyers will for the most part set their Internet search parameters with a minimum price and maximum price if you are outside this range your house will not be seen. Miller goes on to offer, "So if you're thinking about pricing your house at \$300,000 you might want to put it at \$299,999 so you don't lose anybody over a search set-up that was a dollar short of being seen by potential buyers." So if you're on the cusp, consider rounding down to

capture more eyeballs. Remember what we said about padding? It cuts both ways.

Test the waters with a soft rollout

While choosing a price can be scary, consider this one small loophole: Some brokerages offer a “soft” rollout plan in which they highlight the house as “coming soon” online, without officially listing the house in a multiple listing service. That buys you time to test the market, see if people will click at that price – then adjust accordingly without having to officially lower or raise your price on the record.



Step 3: Pretty It Up

Once you've made repairs, chosen a Realtor®, and decided on an asking price, your home is almost ready for market—but first, how about a little priming and polishing? Or maybe a *lot* of priming and polishing. After all, you want your home to make a great first impression on buyers and to show your home in the best possible light, heed these savvy seller tips!

Stash your stuff

When you're just living in your home, a bit of clutter is business as usual. You know the drill: video game cartridges in the bathroom, toolbox in the kitchen, tuxedo shirt inexplicably in the garage. But when you're trying to sell, all this disorder can be deadly. "Sellers really need to remove as much of their clutter as they can so their home's spaciousness is highlighted and to avoid having their home's features lost," says Steve Miller from the Nashville Home Guys.

One way to help pare down your belongings is to go room by room, boxing up anything you haven't used or worn in at least six months. What's that you say? There's *nothing* you're not using? Try anyway. You'll probably be surprised by the stuff you won't miss. (Bonus: You'll have less to move later.)

One area where you'll want to be merciless is your kitchen counter: Remove everything but your coffee maker, so people will think, "Wow, such a huge kitchen!" And to allow home buyers to really envision themselves living there, you'll also want to pack up personal items such as the framed photos, report cards on the fridge, or your kid's collection of "Star Wars" snow globes.

But don't just stuff those things in the closet. Instead, stack boxes neatly in the attic, basement, or, best of all, a storage facility—the perceived extra space you add to your home could be worth the rental cost and then some.

Stage to sell

These days, home staging is all the rage: On average, staged homes sell 88% faster and for a whopping 20% more than ones where home sellers just kept their furnishings in place. And while you can hire a professional stager, you can also cop a few of their tricks for free.

For instance, hanging curtain rods higher can give the illusion of taller ceilings. Well-placed mirrors can make rooms appear bigger and brighter. Want to go the extra step? Paint your walls white, layer in neutrals, then add pops of color with pillows or a cashmere throw on the couch for a cozy glow.

Push furniture out and away from each other to open up floor space, but be careful to keep window space clear. Conceal flaws whenever possible; if the view out a window isn't great, put up sheer curtains so the light comes in but the scenery stays hidden. And as with all your possessions, think "less is more," although stagers do sometimes strategically add furniture (such as a cozy reading chair in a bedroom corner) to give the illusion of *more* space. Go figure!

Boost your curb appeal

Finally, it is time to take a hard look at the outside of your house. After all, that's the first thing buyers will see when they pull up, so you've got to work that curb appeal hard. "First impressions are always the most important. Even if you've gotten everything on the inside in perfect showing condition and the outside has not been as carefully attended to the result will be a buyer questioning the value of the home because of that first impression," Steve offers.

For starters, take a good hard look at the paint. If it's looking dull or dingy, try power washing first. You can rent a power washer from most home improvement stores; a good wash can take off layers of dirt that make your home look shabby. Most professional paint jobs come with a 25-year warranty, and if you're long past that, it may be time for a new coat. At the very least, slapping a coat of paint on your front door will give you the most bang for your buck—because that's what buyers will see up close before they even knock.

Paint aside, your yard also needs to be in order. Overgrown trees can make a home seem dark and creepy. If your trees are touching any part of your house, you should scale them back. If your front lawn is lacking in shrubs and flowers, add some. Even in winter, you can find hardy plants such as evergreen boxwood and holly bushes. Also make sure your lawn is mowed, and if you have a pool that's open, keep it sparkling.

Once you've gotten your home looking fantastic both inside and out, it's time to break out your camera and spread the news that it's up for grabs!



Step 4: Create an Eye-Catching Ad

Long before home buyers set foot in your place, declare with a flourish “This is the one,” watch the clouds part and the rainbows form, and make you a terrific offer, they have to know you’re selling it first. And it’s up to you and your Realtor® to spread the word. Only how?

Take great pics

Online house shopping is a lot like online dating. Everyone will tell you they loved your bio, but really, they’re just looking at the photos. To show your home in the best light, consider hiring a pro. “The photos are the single most important part in the marketing of your home,” says Steve Miller of the Nashville Home Guys. Steve goes on to say, “If you have a Realtor who has a passion for photography, as I do, you have the best of both worlds because as a Realtor I know what hooks a potential buyer.” But there are some homes that having a pro shoot at the Realtor’s direction can be extremely helpful. Ask your Realtor for suggestions, or look through the Real Estate Photographers of America and International.

But if you (or your Realtor) want to take a crack at snapping some winning images yourself, we learned these tips from a professional photographer:

- Store away everything you can before you start shooting. Movable art, throw pillows, brightly colored small appliances, and other knickknacks might make your home look cozy and inviting to buyers *in person*, but

those small items don't translate well in photos. For your photos to look the best, you want to draw the eye to the key elements of the room—such as the fireplace or the huge bay window. Too much going on in each shot? Those eyes won't know where to focus.

- Don't use your smartphone. Let's repeat this one: *Don't use your smartphone*. This is your house you're selling, remember? For the best shots, the camera and the lens matter. Aim for using a digital camera with HDR (high-dynamic-range mode) capabilities, and take photos with a wide-angle lens that can capture the whole room without making the space feel squished.
- Try shooting from every viewpoint imaginable—and then add a few more that you might not have originally imagined. Take plenty of shots of each room from every angle. To make rooms appear more spacious, crouch down and snap at knee level. Experiment.
- Edit and retouch your photos using software such as Photoshop—but remember, less is more. "My goal with any retouching is to only make it look as much like the actual location as I can so it matches what the buyer finds when they come to look," Steve remarks. Stick to the basics and add just enough to enhance the photos, otherwise buyers may think you have something to hide. And most likely, you do.

Write a winning description

After the photos, buyers will read your listing details. At the top of your listing should be the basics: number of bedrooms and bathrooms and the square footage. Next come the stand-out features. "Anything you have enhanced or any of the stand-out features of your home should be heralded," says Steve.

While your Realtor will usually write your listing, you can (and *should*) have final approval. And it turns out certain words reel in buyers better than others. Here are five words correlated with a higher sales price, according to research featured in *Freakonomics*:

- Granite
- State-of-the-art
- Corian

- Maple
- Gourmet

The reason these work: They're specific. Granite countertops give you a good idea what that kitchen is like, as do maple floors. Terms that are vague or appear to be trying too hard will backfire. Below are five terms correlated to a lower sales price:

- Fantastic
- Spacious
- !
- Charming
- Great neighborhood

So keep an eye out for eye-roll-inducing adjectives that might very well turn off buyers.

Build buzz on social media

To get the word out, your Realtor will post your listing in the local multiple listing service, worldwide sites such as realtor.com®, and their own brokerage business website. To add to the potential buyer pool yourself, get to sharing. Social media isn't *only* for pictures of cats and political opinions; you can find a buyer for your house, too.

"Social media has become such a force in real estate, you have give yourself a presence there!" Steve says. After all, your friends and acquaintances will take a special interest in helping you out—make doing so just a click away. Even if they aren't looking to buy, someone in their own network could be, so encourage your friends to share the post and pass it along. While Facebook is a tried-and-true favorite for posting listings, you can also use Twitter or photo-driven Instagram to great effect.

Make sure to market offline, too

Even in today's Internet-obsessed world, you and your Realtor need to do some offline marketing as well. Remember those yard signs from seemingly bygone days? They may not be the reigning house marketing tactics anymore, but it's still a good idea to let your Realtor pop one in the yard. A study by the National Association of Realtors® found that 48% of buyers still relied on yard signs to help their search.

Bottom line: You never know which avenue will reach the right home buyer who will lay eyes on your home and fall in love. And all you need is love—however you find it.



Step 5: Strike The Right Deal

Once your home is finally on the market and listed, it's *showtime*. Will you be deluged with offers, or will your home be pervaded by the lulling but ever-so-unnerving sound of crickets?

And if you do get just one or two offers, and they're not as high as you'd hoped, what do you do? *What do you do?*

Never fear, dear sellers—that's why Steve Miller and the Nashville Home Guys are here! In this fifth step, we'll show you how to navigate the negotiation process and come to a deal that will make you happy. More than happy, even!

Getting those offers in

If you're not in a rush to sell your house, it may make sense to see what offers roll in over a month, but if no offers come in then your agent might want you to consider a price reduction. "There are only 3 things that sell a house—Location, Condition and Price," Steve Miller of the Nashville Home Guys says. He goes on to add, "If the home's location is good and the condition of the property is good and you still haven't received an offer in a reasonable time, the only thing left is a reduction in price to rectify the situation."

“In a hot real estate market or with a home in a desirable neighborhood and you expect multiple offers, be sure to work with your Realtor to establish a deadline for the highest and best offer,” Steve says. But to avoid appraisal problems you’ll need to be confident that your home is priced right, relative to its appeal. If all goes well, you can sell for over asking.

Reviewing your first offer

Once you have an offer in hand, you’re probably scanning for one thing: the price.

“In Nashville’s hot market, homes are selling anywhere from 90% to 100%+ of list,” Steve says. The offers on your home should fall in that range, but don’t rely on price alone. Every offer has five important components:

- Price
- Closing assistance
- Closing date
- Buyer financing
- Contingencies

Some offers may seem great on the surface, but significantly less so once you dig in. For instance: Is the buyer asking for closing assistance? Often first-time buyers don’t have enough money to cover the down payment *and* the closing costs, so they’ll ask the seller to foot some of the bill—about 2% to 3% of the total closing costs is a common request. This can be accomplished by raising the sale price of the home to accommodate your buyer and insure you receive the payout you were expecting.

The buyer’s time frame to close may not seem like a big deal on the surface, but it can actually matter a lot, especially if you give the buyer a long leash. If the deal falls through, you’ll have to put the house back on the market and wait for more offers. On the other hand, if the buyer wants to move in right away, you might be left scrambling (and, quite possibly, temporarily homeless). Make sure the timing works for *you*.

Good so far? Now make sure the buyer has financing. Hopefully, the buyer's agent included a Lender pre-approval letter verifying the buyer's financing and how much the buyer will put toward the down payment and earnest money. The last thing you want is to accept an offer, only to find out afterward that the buyer can't come up with the necessary cash.

Finally, there are normally three contingencies that come with any offer:

1. Finance contingency - This makes the contract contingent on the the buyer actually being able to get a loan.
2. Appraisal - The lender will do an appraisal confirming the value of the property for the buyer's loan.option to back out of the deal if something goes wrong.
3. Inspection - The buyer will request a period time for him and his inspectors to do inspections highlighting any problems that may exist with the home. Then there will a set amount of time for the buyer to submit any repairs they request the seller to have done. At that time it becomes a matter of negotiation to be finalized within the specified timetable.

A buyer may have some more contingencies than these that he wants to add but you can count on these and any others can be judged on a point by point basis.

When to counter

You always have the option to return the buyer's offer with a counter offer of your own.

"Anything in an offer can be countered including price, closing date, contingencies, etc. If there is something you want changed make that a part of your counter offer," Steve says. But if you do, keep it reasonable and remember the object is to sell your house.

If you don't agree with the buyer's contingencies, consider your position first.

Keep in mind, the buyer may not accept your counter outright. You can play Let's Make a Deal, but always consider your bottom line. Is it worth it to keep countering for a small amount of money or single contingency? Don't get trapped in a loop; consider the buyer's side of things. These prospective buyers may be maxed out. To help you decide, ask your agent to call the buyer's agent and hash it out with them. Get some insight into the buyer's state of mind and whether he can budge.

Once you've accepted an offer, it's time to close. Scary, we know! But Steve Miller and Nashville Home Guys have got you covered in the next step.



Step 6: Get Ready To Close

Hooray! You've found a buyer for your home. You're done, right? *Right?*

Not quite. All you have to do now is get yourself—and your house—ready to close, and we're here to help. Let's dive in!

Earnest money

When the buyer makes an offer on your house and you accept, the buyer will write you a check for a deposit known as *earnest money*. Everyone at some point gets a bit puzzled by earnest money. It comes down to a simple idea: This is money you put forward that proves that you are earnest about your intentions to move forward on the deal. These funds are held by a third party until you close the deal; on average, buyers pay about 1% to 2% of the offer amount.

If the deal goes through, the earnest money becomes part of the buyer's down payment (or full cash payment). If the deal falls through because you're unable to meet the buyer's contingencies (for example with the inspection or appraisal), that money gets returned to the buyer. Usually. However, if buyers back out just because they randomly change their mind, you get to keep that

money for all the hassle—consider it a hefty consolation prize for having to put your home back on the market.

The seller's disclosure

As soon as you accept an offer, you will need to supply the buyer with the Tennessee Property Condition Disclosure—basically an itemized list of any problems with the house. But how *much* do you have to disclose?

It all depends on your state laws. The legal site Nolo.com has a list of disclosure laws for various states, and your agent can also provide you with the requirements for your area. Generally, expect to dish the dirt on:

- Basic information about the house, like the age or utility costs
- Structural problems, like the condition and age of the roof
- Environmental issues, like if the property is located in a flood plain
- Known issues, like flooding in the basement

Even if your state doesn't have strict requirement rules, you can also disclose more than the minimum, and it may make sense to do so. "Disclosure is the name of the game in avoiding any legal problems concerning a sale and the safest thing to do is tell everything you know about your home," says Steve Miller and the Nashville Home Guys. It sounds counterproductive—after all, you don't want to scare the buyer away—but withholding information could come back to haunt you.

After all, the buyer will find out sooner or later, so it's best to be up front

The inspection

Unless you've sold the home "as is" (and sometimes even if you have), the buyer will want an inspection on the home. The inspector's job is to look for problems like:

- Roof damage
- Structural problems
- Plumbing problems

- Fire hazards like bad wiring or improperly working chimneys
- Major appliance and HVAC issues

Since the buyers hire the inspector, the report will go to them. If they spot anything amiss, trust us, you will hear about it, as it may become a negotiation point you'll have to work out before you close.

Basically, the buyer may want some repairs done after reviewing the seller's disclosure and conducting the inspection. The repairs have to be legit problems (the buyer can't just walk because the stove is outdated). "The repairs requested can't be for cosmetic things like paint colors, etc. but only for items that affect the integrity of the home's structure and functionality," says Steve. While fixing it yourself may seem cheaper, it's faster to offer a credit, so be sure to consider what a delay would cost you.

The appraisal

If your buyers are getting a mortgage, the Lender will hire an appraiser. An appraiser is similar to an inspector, in that he comes to your house and checks it out, top to bottom. Only the purpose is different: Rather than looking for problems and repairs, an appraiser is trying to estimate what your home is worth, so that the lender knows the investment is sound. To do that, the appraiser will not only size up your home in person but check out the sale prices of comparable houses in your neighborhood (much as a Realtor would do for you). If the appraiser's price matches the one your buyers are paying (or even if it's higher), all is good.

But if the appraisal comes back *lower* than the asking price, it may become a problem. Typically, lenders won't loan buyers anything above the appraisal amount. The buyers have two choices: Pay cash for the difference, or negotiate a lower sale price with you. If they choose the latter, you've got two choices, too: Accept the lower home price, or walk. To decide, ask yourself: How easy would it be to find a new buyer? If you were deluged with offers, it may be in your interests to move on, but keep in mind that you might run into the same problem with subsequent appraisals. So unless

you're confident your home is worth more and you're willing to head back to square one, you may want to take a hit just to keep moving forward.

Next step? The close. Hallelujah!



Step 7: Head To Closing

The good news: You're almost home free (or free of your home in this case). You've accepted the buyer's offer, the negotiations are *finally* winding down, and there is only one more little box to check: closing.

OK, so maybe it isn't a *little* thing. And maybe you're a little worried something is still going to go wrong, but that's why Steve and the Nashville Home Guys are here! We will show you how to get through closing without a hitch—or barely a hitch (hey, stuff happens).

Get the repairs done

First things first: You've got to get those repairs done. We get it—the last thing you want to do now is work on a house you are about to sell. But if you

agreed to make repairs or improvements, don't put them off until the last minute.

"The aim should be to have all repairs done the week before closing so there no last minute hiccups that can delay the closing," says Steve. Getting things done ahead of time will give you plenty of wiggle room if something should still go wrong, or if the buyer finds a problem during the final walkthrough (more on that to come).

So check the Repair/Replacement Amendment you and the buyer agreed to and get to it—and don't forget to cover yourself. Save receipts from items purchased and invoices from contractors, and take before and after photos of any work completed. You will have proof that repairs were completed on the off chance that the buyers contest them during the walkthrough or at closing.

The final walkthrough

Before your closing date—often 24 hours before—the buyers and the buyers' agent will do one more walkthrough of the house (for which you should *not* be present). They will go through every room of the house, inside and outside—a process that typically takes about a half hour. Some buyers will go into detail, testing every light switch. But in most cases, the buyer is just looking to make sure agreed-upon repairs were made and no new issues have crept up before closing.

"Sometimes, a leak may have started under a sink or the roof may have sprung a leak that is new and will need to be repaired before closing," Steve adds. If the buyers do find an issue, you may have a chance to fix the problem to keep the closing on track.

If the problem is big enough, you may have to delay your closing date to give time for the repair. But that only happens occasionally.

The closing

Many closings go smoothly. By this point, the buyers are excited to get into their new house, agreed-on repairs have been made, and the sellers are ready to get *out*. If things are going smoothly, the closing for you might boil down to a blur of paperwork. "The closing attorney will walk you through the process, explaining each document and all the places that you will need to sign to finalize the transaction," Steve says. He goes on to add, "Most buyers and sellers will use different title attorneys so pay attention that the numbers agree with what you were expecting. If not, say something so that the problem can be fixed."

Congratulations!

Once the negotiations are handled and the papers are signed, the buyers' funds are transferred to your attorney, who will handle the payments to cover your loan and pay your real estate team. Thankfully, this part is handled by someone else. And then comes the best part: You'll get a check for the remainder, usually the same day in most states depending on the closing time!

Next we'll cover the last step: Officially moving out and moving on!



Step 8: Move On Out!

Well, dear home sellers, we've come a long way—together! From the first coat of paint you used to freshen up your house's trim to the stress of wrangling your way to a deal, Steve Miller and the Nashville Home Guys have been with you every step of the way. Now you've made it to the final hurdle of selling a home: moving on out!

Don't worry, this is the easy part. But, as with the previous seven steps, you want to do it right—and that's why we're here to help to get you through the last leg of your journey!

Get your timeline in order

Once the paperwork is signed at closing, the buyers will officially own the house ... and you won't. "So it is imperative that you have removed everything from the home and left it clean and ready for your buyers to move in," says Miller. If for any reason it becomes apparent that you are not going to be able to be out on the close date, you need to communicate that as early as possible to your Realtor before the close date. The earlier the better, so a new possession date can be worked out. Sometimes, buyers are willing to close and then grant a 2 to 3 day period for the Sellers to move out, but this needs to be handled well in front of the closing or there is a chance you won't be getting your money until you get out.

What to leave behind

To make sure you're leaving behind everything the buyer wanted—and that you agreed to—double-check the closing documents. There should be an itemized list of what comes with the house. And even if the buyers didn't formally request them, it's just good form to leave certain types of things behind.

If you do inadvertently take an item that the buyers had requested, they have the right to ask for it back—and they could potentially sue you in civil court for the cost of a replacement. So, when in doubt, feel free to check with the buyers before you grab and go.

But don't leave anything else behind

Just as important as what you leave behind is what you don't. Your buyers have a right to move into a home that's been cleared of furniture and other movable items they didn't expressly request.

Even if you're careful, you might forget something—at which point the buyers may contact their agent to get it back to you, but they also have the legal right to just keep or get rid of it. So double-check areas (e.g., the attic, garage, basement, storage shed, kitchen, and bathroom drawers) where people commonly overlook items.

Clean up

It's common courtesy to leave the place not only clear of your possessions, but also clean. However, that doesn't mean you have to leave it *immaculate*. In most cases, a simple broom-clean will do. That means wiping down the countertops, cleaning out drawers, sweeping or vacuuming all the floors, and giving the bathroom and kitchen appliances a once-over so the new owners aren't grossed out when they arrive.

Wait! Are you forgetting anything?

Before you close the door for the last time, run through a quick checklist. Did you eyeball every room for stray items? Have you forwarded your mail and turned off the utilities? Is the water running in the pool? We all get in a bit of a rush even in the best planned moves, but you won't be able to get back in, so it can't hurt to do a final run-through.

Once you're ready, it's time to leave. You can drop a line to your Realtor® to let her know you're out, although it's usually a courtesy more than a necessity. If you're feeling truly gracious, feel free to leave a note, card, or bottle of bubbly congratulating the people who've inherited your former home. Given all the fond memories you've built between those walls, wouldn't it be nice to start the home's new owners off on the right foot?

And finally, buy yourself some Champagne, too. Make it the good stuff—you've earned it!

Source: Realtor.com



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