

THE PATH

TO

Home

How To Navigate the Home Buying Process Like a Pro




NW ELEVATE

John L. Scott[®]
REAL ESTATE

GETTING *Started*



Buying a home is an exciting milestone. This guide will help you understand the process, and feel confident to make informed decisions.

Finances

1

Meet with a lender to understand what you can afford.

Check Your Credit Score

Higher scores will get better mortgage terms. Check for any errors + pay down debts if necessary.

Determine Your Budget

Work with lender to calculate your estimated expenses:

- Total for closing: down payment + closing costs (2-5% of home price)
- Monthly payments: mortgage, insurance, taxes + potential HOA fees

Get Pre-Approved

A lender will assess your finances and give you a price range. Don't stretch to your budget - even if you get approval. Make sure to leave room for future expenses.



Hire The Right Agent

2

This is one of the most important decisions you will make. Not all agents are created equal. Research and shop around to find the right fit.

- Choose a local expert with experience in the area you're looking to move to
- Beware of discount agents, who offer lower fees but lower quality service too
- Look for reviews from past clients

Once you decide who to work with, sign a **Buyer's Agency Agreement**, outlining their compensation.

Mortgage Evaluation

Pre-Qualification: Estimate of what you *might* be able to borrow, based on self-reported info. Isn't seen as strong by sellers.

Pre-Approval: Formal review of credit, income, and finances determines *exactly* how much you can borrow. Requires credit check and documentation. Shows sellers you're a serious, qualified buyer.



HOUSE *Hunting*



Learn the Market

3

With support from your agent, review local market data + learn what to expect.

Generally in Western Washington

- Popular areas are fast-paced and competitive
- Interest varies in other neighborhoods
- Spring and early summer usually see the most buyer activity



Prioritize the Wishlist

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Decide the most important features or characteristics, instead of what is just nice to have.

- Location: near schools, work + activities
- Lot size: yard space, property features
- Home size: number of bedrooms + bathrooms
- Layout: single or multi-level, open living area
- Condition: newly updated, or needs work

Be realistic about what is possible within your budget, and stay open-minded to compromise.

Data Insight

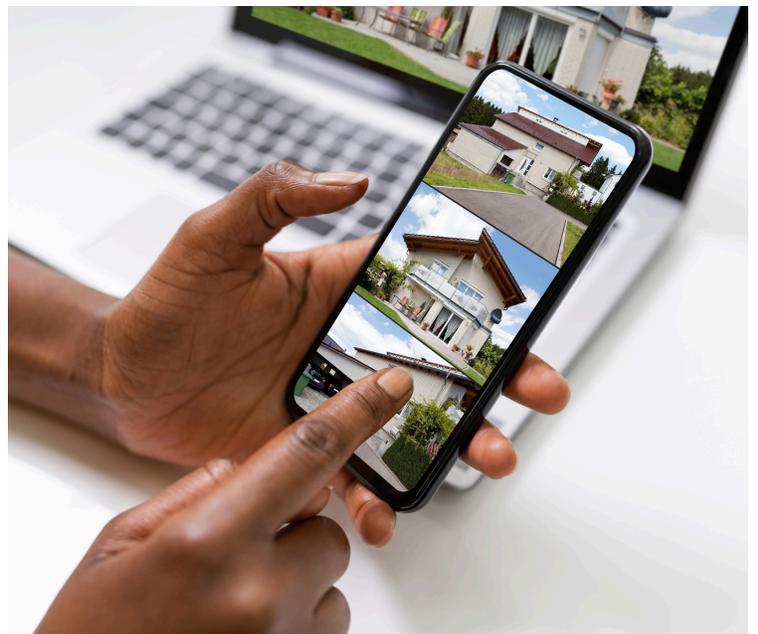
In the Puget Sound area, most folks own their home for about ten years before moving. Chances are, your first home will not be your *forever* home.

Tour Homes

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This is the fun part! Your agent will arrange visits + accompany you on tours.

- Think of how you'll live in the home and use various spaces
- Focus on function, not cosmetic issues
- Keep an eye out for repair or maintenance concerns
- Be flexible - it may take time to find the perfect fit
- Assess the neighborhood too



MAKING AN *Offer*



Once you find “the one” your agent will guide you through the process of submitting an offer. In a competitive market, don’t get excited just yet. You may get a counteroffer or need to keep shopping. It is best to stay cautiously optimistic.

Decide Terms

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Consider more than just price, and make sure you understand all the terms of the offer.

- Closing date and timelines
- Financing
- Contingencies: inspections, appraisal, others as needed

A **home inspection** gives a better idea of the property's condition and can uncover hidden or costly issues. It provides an opportunity to negotiate repairs or back out of the deal if serious problems are discovered.

While it could be tempting to skip the inspection in a competitive market to strengthen your offer, it is a risky move that may lead to expensive surprises later.



Purchase Price

7

Work with your agent to decide what will make a competitive offer that fits your budget. Ultimately, what matters most is how much you want the home. Factors to consider:

- Condition of the home
- Local demand + sales data from similar homes
- How much does it meet your needs

Pro Tip

Fixtures - anything attached to the home or property, and will come with the home unless otherwise agreed.

Personal Property - unattached items, like furnishings or potted plants, would not be included. If you'd like to keep something, ask your agent to negotiate so that it can be part of the sale.

Submit

8

Once you settle on terms and the purchase price, you will sign the **Purchase and Sale Agreement**.

- Wait to hear back from the Seller, through your agent
- Be prepared to provide the **Earnest Money** deposit

UNDER

Contract



Mutual Acceptance

9

If the Seller accepts your offer, they will also sign. You now have a legal contract between yourself and the Seller.



Final Steps

12

- Complete the mortgage process with your lender
- Meet with Escrow to sign the final paperwork



Contingencies

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Varies for each deal, but might include:

Home Inspection: May request repairs or credits

Appraisal: Needs to meet or exceed sale price

HOA Review: Common for condos

Septic or Well Inspection: As appropriate

Each step may require further negotiation.

It's Official When the county records your name as the owner on the deed. Coordinate with your agent to receive the keys to your new home!



Title + Escrow

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- Escrow company handles legal docs, and title transfer
- They will reconcile credits + debits, and collect and pay out funds to all parties
- You'll get a **Closing Settlement** outlining all fees that you'll want to review carefully

AFTER

Closing



Celebrate

There will only have one day that is your first day as a new homeowner. This is a huge accomplishment! Allow time to celebrate before getting wrapped up in moving.



Settle In

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- Update your address
- Set up utilities + home services
- Secure your home with locks or a security system
- Get to know the area + meet your neighbors
- Arrange for any planned repairs or updates
- Start a maintenance checklist
- Keep a file with your mortgage, warranty + insurance documents for easy access

Basic Maintenance Checklist

SPRING

- Clean gutters, downspouts + drainage systems
- Service AC unit or heat pump (if applicable)
- Check roof, foundation + crawl space for leaks or damage
- Test smoke and CO detectors and replace batteries if needed
- Pressure wash or deep clean siding, decks, patios, walkways + driveway
- Clean windows + check for broken seals or cracks; seal any gaps

SUMMER

- Clean and inspect dryer vent
- Touch up exterior paint + sealants
- Flush water heater to clear sediment
- Inspect caulking in bathrooms + kitchen
- Trim trees and shrubs away from home
- Check attic ventilation and insulation

FALL

- Service furnace + replace filters
- Check chimney and fireplace as needed
- Insulate outdoor faucets
- Cover / store outdoor furniture + hoses

WINTER

- Keep gutters, downspouts + drainage systems clear
- Check for drafts + seal with weather stripping if needed
- Monitor attic + crawl space for moisture levels or leaks

LEARN

More



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We're not your typical real estate team.

We're experienced professionals passionate about helping folks build long-term wealth through real estate.

We guide first-time buyers and seasoned investors.

Whether you're renting and ready to buy your first home, or looking to invest in additional properties, we're here to support you.

Education and integrity are at the core of what we do.

We listen first, communicate clearly, and offer honest, pressure-free guidance. Our goal is to make the process smooth, stress-free, and empowering.

We support clients from all backgrounds.

Everyone deserves to feel informed, respected, and confident when making big financial decisions, and we're committed to creating that experience.

This isn't just real estate, it's your future.

And we're here to help you build it.

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