

# your home

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*Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers*



↘ While the price of a home might seem to be in your budget at face value, forgotten costs of the buying and moving process could potentially put you over budget in the long run. Here are six costs that are often overlooked, courtesy of Redfin:

**Improvements.** Even if the home you buy isn't a fixer-upper, there may be things you want to change or add to make it your own, such as new flooring, paint or countertops, which can add up to be a large expense.

**Moving.** Moving costs money, and the price goes up the more stuff you have and the farther you're moving.

**Furnishings.** You may want to buy furnishings for your new home, since the furniture and accessories you own now may not be enough or fit in with a new aesthetic.

**Maintenance.** This is an expense that catches renters especially off guard, because maintenance is usually taken care of by the building owners. You can

expect to repair or replace a variety of things during the life of a home, so be sure to include maintenance costs in your budget.

**Utilities.** While you may already be paying for utilities at your current residence, the costs could be higher in your new home depending on the size and area. There are also some utilities that are included in rent that homeowners have to pay for, like garbage collection.

**Time.** You will meet with several people to sign documents, set up utilities and prepare your move—time you might take off from work. This is fine if you're able to use vacation days, but if not, you may need to take unpaid leave.

## TURN IT DOWN

If there's one thing you can count on when you own a home, it's the arrival of the energy bill each month. One homeowner's energy costs will be higher or lower than the next, but there are easy ways to save a little money each month.

**Use the dishwasher.** Dishwashers, especially Energy Star appliances, are more efficient than washing dishes by hand. It's also important to load your dishwasher as effectively as possible, so check your manual for the best way. If you don't own a dishwasher, save water by turning the tap on only when you need to rinse.

**Unplug idle electronics.** Electronics and appliances still use standby energy even when not in use. Since unplugging every cord in your home is not feasible, consider using power

strips with multiple plugs that you can turn off and on with the flip of a switch.

**Circulate air with fans.** Even with central air conditioning, it can be tricky to keep every room at a steady temperature on hot days. Position standing fans to circulate air throughout your home, rather than lowering the AC thermostat temperature. If you have ceiling fans, make sure they're

circulating in the correct direction: counter-clockwise during the summer—so air is being pushed down—and clockwise in the winter.

**Measure laundry loads.** Washing clothes in cold water instead of warm saves energy. And make sure there's enough space inside the dryer for hot air to circulate, or you could end up running two cycles.

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## THE pre-listing LIST

Completing some quick and easy tasks before listing a home for sale can help reduce stress and save time during the home-selling process.



### 1 Clean the House

An important part of selling a home is keeping it clean in anticipation of a showing. Cleaning the home will convey that it's been well cared for and that the house is less susceptible to any issues caused by neglect.



### 2 Finish the Honey-Do List

Some areas of the home, although not typically thought of as areas that would affect a home's appeal, may be displayed as safety concerns on a home inspection report. Help yourself by replacing burnt-out light bulbs, testing smoke detectors, replacing air filters and unclogging drains.



### 3 Check All Outlets

A sampling of electrical outlets will be tested as part of the home inspection to make sure they're in good working order. Take note of which outlets are not functioning and replace them, or consider hiring an electrician to make sure all outlets and the electrical box are updated and in proper working condition.



### 4 Clear Areas for Easy Access

Home inspectors will be looking at the major systems of the home, including the foundation, HVAC systems, electrical systems, plumbing and even the water heater. Making sure they can easily access these areas, including the basement and attic, will save time during the inspection process.



### 5 Consider a Pre-Listing Inspection

Hiring experienced and professional home inspectors can save a lot of headaches during the selling process. They will thoroughly go through the home and notify you of any potential issues ahead of listing the property.



This article was provided by HomeTeam Inspection Service.  
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