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# JJ Real Estate

## Insight Newsletter

Monthly Insight into the Real Estate Market

current topics >>>

### How to Sell Your Home in a Seller's Market

*A down market is where supply (houses available) is more than demand (buyers). Generally, the seller would reduce the price to sell faster; however, there are other ways to make your house more attractive to buyers.*

With some extra work, you can increase your odds of getting your house sold. Here are some tips:

- 1. Improve your home's curb appeal.**  
*(see article in this newsletter for details).*
- 2. Differentiate your home from Neighbors.**  
*Create custom designs to make your house memorable, such as patios, adding amenities.*
- 3. Clean & Declutter**  
*Remove personal items from the home to help buyers picture their lives there. Remove furniture to make the rooms bigger. (also check out "staging your home" article in this newsletter).*
- 4. Make your home "move-in" Ready**  
*Be sure that electrical and plumbing is up to code. Be sure such things as windows, doors and appliances are in working order. The idea is to have buyers know they can move right in and enjoy their home without having to wait for repairs.*
- 5. Sweeten the Deal**  
*Offer a home warranty or cover some closing costs.*
- 6. Pricing your Home**  
*Pricing is the most important. Consult with a Realtor to be sure you're priced to sell.*

## Creating Curb Appeal

### Making a good first impression counts!

*The outside appearance of your home is a potential buyer's first impression to your house. You can only make one first impression, so you will want to make sure the outside of your house is appealing. There are many ways to spruce up your curb appeal, from major projects to simple projects that can be done in one day. The best part is most improvements will also add value to your home, supporting your asking price.*

Power washing the siding can give your home a like new look. Depending on the siding of your home, a fresh coat of paint will also give your house a new look.

Be sure to repaint all trim around the windows and doors.

Replace all the hardware, such as the numbers on your house, a new mailbox, and changing door knobs.

Adding outdoor lighting is beautiful but provides security. Lighting can easily be installed. Garden lights can be used to light up walkways and shine onto the house.

Having your front door stand out is also appealing.

You can do this by painting it a different color but be sure it is complimentary to the outside colors of your house.

Be sure your lawn is free from weeds and doesn't look uncared for. Fill in bare spots with sod that matches the rest of the lawn.

Prune bushes and pull weeds and add fresh mulch to flower beds. You can add new flower beds to areas that are bare and look out of place in your yard.

Simple lawns are also appealing. Don't over-do the yard with shrubbery and flower beds that may require a lot of upkeep. You can add some decorative fencing

Be sure your gutters are cleaned out and in good repair and working.

If your siding needs repair, consider applying stone veneer as this is becoming more and more popular choice in siding.

If you have a bare porch, consider some rocking chairs or even a porch swing. If you don't have a porch, create a seating area with a couple of chairs and a small outdoor table

Add window boxes and shutters. Add a flag. Add a brick or stone walkway.

Be sure that all windows are sealed and insulated. Replace all windows that have fog in them, as the seal has broken, and buyers will ask for them to be replaced.

Be sure your garage door is working and matches the exterior of your house.

Well maintained landscaping and decorative painting will help spruce up a home's exterior

set the stage >>>

# Staging Your Home for Prospective Buyers

*Before you're able to stage your home successfully, you need to understand what buyers are looking for in a home. If you are selling to conservative community, you may want to avoid modern looks. A more traditional community may want modern looks and art deco. The idea is to allow buyers to vision themselves living in the home.*



## Kitchens

Update light fixtures. Lighten up the room though brighter lights, natural lighting through windows. Make sure there are no offensive odors. Do not just cover odors, instead use an air-neutralizing spray. Make sure the kitchen is organized and clean. Removing clutter gives the room a spacy feel.

## Bathrooms

Be sure the bathrooms are clean and de-cluttered. Get some decorative hand towels. Update light fixtures. Make sure the shower curtains are clean, or glass doors are clean and decalcified. You can do this with specialized cleaners. Add accent plants.

## Bedrooms

Avoid "gendering" the bedrooms. Children's bedrooms should reflect the style of the rest of the house. Add accent pillows to the beds. Make sure the beds are made and have bedspreads or comforters that are not outdated. Use neutral colors on the walls and with decorations.



## Living Rooms

Update outdated light fixtures. You can find second-hand fixtures on craigslist or new ones at Lowes or Home Depot. Create an accent wall to add drama to a boring room. Update window treatments, or clean blinds. Add throw pillows to furniture. Find some nice paintings on craigslist, yard sales, eBay, that fit multiple styles. Rearrange furniture for easy traffic flow. Minimize furniture or if not enough, rent it. Make sure carpets are clean and odor free. If not, replace carpet.



**Happy Holidays**  
Wishing you a  
happy holiday  
season & Happy  
New Year!!

*As the year ends, take a moment to reflect on your successes this past year and prepare for a promising new year!*

**Did you have guests this holiday season and find you were short on space?**

Call me! I can help you find a new home with plenty of room for your family and house guests! Now is the time to buy or sell your home and I can help!

**For more information go to:  
[www.jjemeraldcoast.com](http://www.jjemeraldcoast.com)**

property advice >>>



## Buying vs. Renting

*Whether you are looking for more space to raise a family or the perfect place to make your own, there are many advantages to owning your own home, ranging from the purely personal to the very practical. For many people the motivation for home ownership comes from the financial benefits. Owning your own home can be a first-rate investment for several reasons:*

**Equity-** Money paid for rent is money that you will never see again. When you buy a house your monthly mortgage payment serves as a type of scheduled savings plan that lenders call "equity," an ownership interest in the property that you can often borrow against or convert into cash by selling the house.

**Tax & Savings Benefits-** Homeowners also get significant tax breaks that are not available to renters. Most importantly, interest paid on a home mortgage is usually deductible. This factor alone can save you a substantial amount each year in federal income taxes. The U.S. Tax Code lets you deduct the interest you pay on your mortgage, your property taxes, and some of the costs involved in buying a home. When you sell, you can generally take up to \$250,000 (\$500,000 for a married couple), as gain without owing any federal income tax.

**Stable Housing Costs-** Rent will typically increase year after year, while mortgage payments can remain unchanged throughout the entire repayment period. Unlike rent, your fixed-rate mortgage payments don't rise over the years, so your housing costs may decline as you own the home longer. However, keep in mind that property taxes and insurance costs will likely increase.

**Appreciation/Increase Value-** Houses typically increase in value, or "appreciate," over time. It's not unusual to find a house that sold for \$150,000 fifteen years ago to be valued at much more than that amount today. This increased value is as good as money in the bank to the homeowner. The number of households is expected to rise 10 -15% over the next decade, creating continued high demand for housing.

**Freedom & Community-** Unlike renting, the home is yours. You can decorate any way you choose. Likewise, any upgrades and amenities that appeal to you can also add to the value of your home, which is yours. Remaining in one neighborhood for several years allows you and your family to build long-lasting relationships within the community.

# Essential Tips for First-Time Homebuyers

There are some common mistakes and misconceptions that first-time homebuyers make that can be avoided and some tips to make your first home purchase a success below.

One of the most common mistakes is not knowing your credit score and monitoring your credit for mistakes or problems. You typically need a 620-credit score to qualify for a mortgage. There are a variety of credit monitoring sources that can help you keep track of your credit file. Additionally, you can get a free complete credit report once a year. You need to talk to a mortgage broker to find out how much you can afford and to guide you in ways to identify problems on your credit report and ways to correct it. If everything is well, you should seek a pre-approval from your lender, you will not be able to put in an offer on a home without one. Additionally, keep in communication with your lender during the entire process.

Work with a Realtor. They are knowledgeable with real estate, negotiation skills and advising you in housing value. They are free to buyers!

Be fully committed to purchasing your own home. Weigh out the pros and cons to buying vs. renting. It will typically take a few years to offset the upfront costs before you start to gain equity in the home. Finding a home is not a part time project. It takes typically 10 weeks to find the right home. Be sure to keep in constant contact with your Realtor through the entire process.

If your Realtor is not getting the job done, get a new Realtor that will fit your needs.



First time homebuyers often underestimate the cash they will need for the purchase of a home. They will often need to cover the following expenses:

- Down payment- Down payment is typically 20%. Giving smaller down payment will make your monthly payments higher and require mortgage insurance.
- Earnest money deposit
- Inspections & appraisal
- Closing Costs
- Prepaid interest
- Upfront escrows for property taxes and homeowner's insurance.

Find a home that will fit your needs, not your tastes. Give your Realtor a list of basic essentials that you must have in a house and a list of what you would like. Your Realtor can help you find a home that will most closely match your needs and wants. However, don't get emotionally attached to a home, stick to the facts about the home.

When you have found your home, GET AN INSPECTION. Inspections will give you accurate details of what condition the house you want to buy is in.

## Military Resources >>>

### PCSing to the area:

This area is one of the best places to be stationed! Not only is this area military friendly, but it isn't like your typical military community, this area is also a favorite tourist destination. Many military service members, including myself, and their families fall in love with this area while they are stationed here. When they retire or transition out of the military they stay or move back here, if located elsewhere. *Good Morning America* declared this area to be one of the top 10 most beautiful places in America! The Emerald Coast is known for its breathtaking beaches covered in sugar white sand and emerald color water.

Ideally, you will want to immediately start researching all aspects of your new base as soon as you receive your PCS orders. Important things to consider is the community, the neighborhoods, proximity from the base and how much time you want to dedicate to commuting. You will want to know the crime statistics, housing availability and local amenities and activities. If you have children, you will want to know the ratings of the schools that your child(ren) will attend. I have a page dedicated to all these issues and more on my site:

<https://ijemeraldcoast.com/p/17023/pcsing>



## Buying or Selling Your Home?

To Celebrate our first newsletter, I am offering an **Old Republic Home Protection Plan\*** as a GIFT to all my clients!

Old Republic Home Protection offers peace of mind, convenience, and budget protection by providing repair and/or replacement coverage for your home's:

Electrical System, Heating System, Plumbing System and Major Appliances

\*See Plan for complete coverage details.

[www.orhp.com](http://www.orhp.com) / 800.445.6999

Offer expires:3/15/2019 Value not to exceed: \$450.00

## Expenses to expect when buying a home

Buyers expenses are usually:

- Title insurance and endorsement fees-Guarantee that the insured party is "free and clear" of loans, liens, encumbrances, back taxes, easements or covenants, conditions or restrictions against the property.
- Escrow fees (50%).
- Impounds and interest on new loan.
- All new loan charges (including appraisal, origination and discount fees, document preparation, etc.).
- Termite inspection fee
- Homeowners insurance premium for first year.
- HOA dues for future months.
- Recording fee (50%).

FHA & VA Mandatory Costs

FHA and VA regulations require the seller to pay the following fees: the entire escrow fee, assignment fee, flood certification fee, bring down endorsements, document preparation fees, photo/inspection fees, tax service contract, warehousing fees, or any other loan cost or charge except the following: prepaid interest, impounds on new loan, loan origination, loan discount fees or appraisal.



# Health & safety...

## Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are vital household safety tools. They should be quickly and easily accessible, so you can suppress or put out small home fires if needed. Fire extinguishers are only meant to handle small fires. In the event of a large fire, evacuate to safety and call 911.

Household extinguishers all have a label showing what kinds of fires they're effective against.

- A is for wood, cloth, or paper;
- B is for flammable liquids like grease or gas; and
- C is for live electricity.

Many extinguishers sold for home use are multipurpose with A-B-C labels. Keep a 10-pound extinguisher in the garage or workshop, a 5-pound extinguisher in the kitchen, and a 2-pound extinguisher in your car.

Learn how to use an extinguisher before a fire emergency. Familiarize yourself with your home extinguishers, and check with your local fire department to see if they offer training.

The easiest way to operate a fire extinguisher is to remember the word PASS: Pull the safety pin, Aim the nozzle low, Squeeze the lever and hold it, and Sweep the nozzle from side to side at the source of the flames until the extinguisher is empty.

Used extinguishers are not reusable and should be replaced. Replace any old, unused extinguishers with pressure gauges in the red zone.



coming soon >>>

## In the Next Issue

**Local Market News**

**For-Sale-By-Owner-Saving Money?**

**Tips for Listing Your Home**

**Pre-Qualify for Home Loan**

**Buyer House-Hunting**

**Home buying for Military families**

## Household Tips

### Post- Holiday Clutter

After the holidays are over and your guests have gone, you're left to deal with the excess clutter. The following tips may help preserve your sanity during post-holiday cleanup.

- Designate a place for your new items straightaway. Otherwise, they might sit in a box or bag for months!
- Sort recyclables, such as discarded paper, shipping boxes, food cartons, etc. Set them aside to take to a recycling center or put them in your household recycle bin.
- Not every holiday gift is a winner. Make space on a shelf in a closet or garage to store any items you plan to re-gift, donate, or return to the store. Locate receipts for the gifts you want to return and store them with each item. Come up with a game plan for getting rid of these items so they don't become new clutter.
- Carve out a good chunk of time to take down holiday decorations. As you're putting items away, ask yourself if they're worth keeping another year. If they're broken or you just don't like them anymore, get rid of them. Once the decorations are all packed up, store them immediately.



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