THE FIRST-TIME HOME BUYER'S

Starter Guide

Everything you actually need to know
before you buy your first home.

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A free guide from RealtyProKit.com

MYTH #1

You do not need 20% down

It is the most expensive myth in home buying. Believing you must save 20% keeps people renting for years longer than they need to. The truth is a lot more hopeful.

The typical first-time buyer puts down about 6 to 7%, not 20%.

Conventional (first-time programs)	as low as 3%
FHA	3.5%
VA (eligible veterans & service members)	0%
USDA (eligible rural & income limits)	0%

The honest catch: under 20% down you usually pay mortgage insurance. On a conventional loan it falls off at 20% equity, and waiting years to save the full 20% almost always costs more than the insurance ever does.

PLAN YOUR CASH

What you'll actually need

Down payment is only one of three cash pieces. Closing costs surprise more first-time buyers than anything else, so estimate all three up front.

Down payment	3% to 20% of the price	$ ________
Closing costs	about 2% to 5% of the price	$ ________
Cash reserves	1 to 2 months of payments	$ ________

Quick down payment math

If the home is...	3% down	5% down	10% down
$250,000	$7,500	$12,500	$25,000
$350,000	$10,500	$17,500	$35,000
$450,000	$13,500	$22,500	$45,000

Tip: you can often ask the seller to cover part of your closing costs. It's called a seller concession, and your agent negotiates it for you.

BEFORE YOU SHOP

Get ready the right way

Fix your credit and your financing before you fall in love with a house, not after.

Credit: start 6 to 12 months early

- Pay your credit cards below 30% of their limit.
- Never miss a payment.
- Do not open any new credit.

No app can promise an exact score. Steady habits are what actually work.

Pre-qualified is not pre-approved

A quick estimate from what you tell the lender. No documents.	The lender verifies income, credit & assets and commits in writing.

Get pre-approved before you tour homes. It sets your real budget and makes your offer stronger. Sellers take a pre-approval seriously; a pre-qualification, much less.

STAY SAFE

Know your budget, protect the deal

The bank's number is not your budget

Keep your housing payment under about 28% of your income, and all your debts under 36%. And remember your real payment is more than principal and interest: add property taxes, insurance, and any HOA. Leave room to actually live.

> **THE 45-DAY DANGER ZONE**
>
> Once you're under contract, your lender pulls your credit again right before closing. Until you have the keys, do not: buy a car, finance furniture, open a credit card, change jobs, or move large amounts of money without a paper trail. One new payment can sink an approval you already had.

Which loan is right for me?

If your credit is still building, FHA is often friendlier. If your credit is strong and you want the mortgage insurance to eventually drop off, conventional usually wins. Ask a lender to quote you both ways and compare the total cost, not just the rate.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Your next step

Buying your first home is overwhelming, and you don't have to do it by yourself. This guide is the doorway. Here is where to go next.

STEP 1: GET THE COMPLETE BUYER GUIDE, FREE

Everything in here, in much more detail and step by step. Sign up and I'll send it straight to you: RealtyProKit.com/free-buyer-guide

A thought to carry

I am building my first home on truth and a plan, not on fear and a myth.

STEP 2: WHEN YOU'RE READY, GO DEEPER

The Toolkit App	Your companion for the whole journey, from "am I ready?" to the keys: savings tracker, calculators, a step-by-step plan, and a reminder that you are not alone. Start free. app.realtyprokit.com
The Complete Guide	The full book, from getting ready through your first year as a homeowner, plus 29 companion worksheets. RealtyProKit.com