

Holiday Shopping Tips



Black Friday and Cyber Monday deals may be calling your name, but if you're in the market for a new home, you'll want to keep two objectives firmly in focus: protecting your credit and spending sensibly. Here are some dos and don'ts to help keep you on track.

Do: *Keep your cash reserves healthy.*

Having cash on hand is a good idea at any stage of your home search. It's a buffer that can save you from late payment dings on your credit report. It's the earnest money you can deposit the moment you find the perfect home. It's also a reassuring sign for lenders that you're a lower risk, since you have resources to handle the unexpected. So, make a budget, stick to it and save major purchases for later.

Don't: *Apply for new credit (or charge a lot on existing cards).*

If you're applying for a mortgage soon, or if you're already in that window between contracting on your home and closing day, it's risky to make big changes to your credit levels. Adding new accounts can lower your average account age and utilizing more of your credit (new or existing) can change your debt-to-income ratio—both contributing factors to your credit score.

Do: *Stock up on smaller home necessities.*

Need a new toaster, blender, lawn mower or linens for your next home? Take advantage of whatever deals fit your budget! Just remember that the more you buy now, the more you'll have to pack and move later.

Don't: Make large furniture purchases.

Decorating your dream home can wait until you have the keys in hand! Large furniture purchases could affect your finances and complicate your home search. What if you find the perfect floor plan, but your brand-new dinner table would look totally out of scale in the dining room? It's much easier to find the furniture that fits your space—and complements the many flooring, cabinet, paint and fixture choices you'll make if you build a new home with us—rather than the other way around.

Do: House hunt!

Most people don't think of model homes as a prime Black Friday destination, but that's what makes it such a great touring day. Walk off some of that turkey and stuffing as you shop for your dream home or make a virtual appointment if you're not ready to leave the comfort of your couch yet.

Don't: Forget what's most important: friends, family and fun!

Thanksgiving weekend is about being thankful for what you have and the people in your life. Make time to connect with your loved ones and see what they're up to. You may find inspiration for gift ideas as you find out about new hobbies and passions they've discovered in the course of this extraordinary year.

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