



How to Narrow Your Housing Search: Finding the Balance between Housing Needs and Wants

Comparing needs and wants can help you focus your search

Knowing what you are looking for can make your housing search easier. This worksheet will help you decide which features you must have, which are preferable, and which ones you can live without. Like most renters, you may need to compromise between wants and needs if you are limited by time and/or money.

Don't be discouraged if you can't find your ideal home; be open to less-than-ideal options that give you time to build positive references and save money for the next move.

Things to consider when deciding how to focus your search

Affordability (budget range): \$ _____ to \$ _____ per month. Most households spend between 35 and 65 percent of their income on rent/shelter and related costs (e.g., utilities).

Preferred move-in date: _____

Other Considerations: Features that address your health and safety needs, or features that address legal requirements/prohibitions (e.g., closeness to specific people).

This is what I am looking for:

After considering the above and/or filling out the worksheet on the next page, summarize your requirements and preferences:

Desired type of accommodation: 1st choice _____ 2nd choice _____

Minimum # bedrooms: _____ Minimum # bathrooms: _____

Essential Features:

Preferred Features:





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Location (areas/neighbourhoods you would consider):

In the fields below, check off which items are must-haves, which are preferred, and which ones you could do without. This will help you decide which rental ads you want to respond to.

Apartment/Unit	I must have	I prefer	I can do without
Private apartment (vs. room in shared house)			
Specific # of rooms/bedrooms			
Furnished			
Private bathroom			
Air conditioning			
Utilities included			
Closets and storage			
One level (no stairs)			
Private deck, porch, or balcony			
Cable and/or internet included			
Other:			
Building	I must have	I prefer	I can do without
Specific type (single family, duplex, multi-family)			
Secured main entrance			
On-site laundry facilities			
Yard/playground			
Elevator			





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Apartment/Unit	I must have	I prefer	I can do without
Accessibility (e.g., ramps, automated doors)			
Pet friendly			
Off-street parking			
Storage space or unit			
On quiet street			
Other:			
Neighbourhood	I must have	I prefer	I can do without
Near public transportation			
Near major roads/highways			
Near schools/daycare			
Near work			
Near healthcare and supportive services			
Near parks and play areas			
Near family/friends			
Near grocery store and shopping			
Near religious and cultural facilities			
Near library/community centre/other facilities			
Well-lit and considered safe to walk at night			
Children can play outside			
Quiet, away from traffic and industrial noise			
Other:			

