

# Make the Most of Virtual Tours

Home buyers and sellers have long used slideshows and photos tours. These resources are one of the first places a buyer looks to find out what's on the market and to assess a property.

They can be deceptive, however. Sellers and rental property owners will frame exactly what they want you to see and hide less desirable areas of a home.

Enter the virtual tour. Virtual tours create a 24/7 open house and give potential buyers and renters a clearer picture, allowing viewers to turn the camera toward every area and walk virtually, all from the comfort of their own homes. Using this technology puts you inside a home to explore areas you can't normally see in photos.

During the pandemic, virtual tours have become even more popular, as many remain skittish about in-person tours and open houses.

Augmented reality, in which buyers would wear headsets with virtual reality goggles, exists but that technology is still not widely available.

A recent survey of millennial



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## REAL ESTATE 101

### More Virtual Tour Tips

Whether you are just getting started on the journey of buying a new home or have already narrowed your choices, a video tour may be in your future. The experts at New Home Source have a list of more tips to help you prepare for your tour at [bit.ly/2GGFUu5](https://bit.ly/2GGFUu5).

renters reveals a majority would be comfortable renting an apartment without an in-person tour using only a virtual tour. But it's doubtful homebuyers would make such a leap.

In-person tours are crucial for buyers to not only get a better sense of the home but also to assess the neighbor-

hood.

You need to visit and tour the area around the home to discover such things as street noise, parking, access to local amenities and to judge the condition of other homes in the neighborhood.

Virtual tours also don't allow potential buyers to smell a house for pet or smoke odors,

or worse, mold.

An initial virtual tour is a great tool for a first look, but in-person visits are essential before buying.

If you're interested in participating in a virtual tour, ask your agent to use FaceTime or Skype to walk around the house "with" you to point out areas of interest and answer

questions.

As with any home tour, you should prepare yourself in advance with a list of questions that include your must-haves.

Virtual tours can also be spatially disorienting and it can be confusing trying to figure out how rooms are structured and connected.

Having a floor plan can be a handy tool to have on hand to connect the dots, as well as providing dimensions.

Having an agent walk through the home as you tour virtually can also be helpful in pointing out any downsides, such as pet odors or musty basement smells. Be thorough. A good agent won't try to hide a home's downsides.

Remember, if you are the buyer you'll want to get as much information out of a virtual tour as an in-person tour. So don't be shy about asking questions and ask them to identify such fixable things as creaky floorboards and loose cabinet doors.

And don't forget to tour outside. Have the agent walk around the house, the patio or deck area, landscaping, garage and driveway, and any out-buildings such as storage sheds.

Making notes during your tour can erase a lot of concerns before scheduling an in-person tour of your own and answer many questions in advance.





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## HOMEWISE GLOSSARY

**FHA 203b:** The most popular FHA government loan. It typically requires a 3% down payment.  
SOURCE: MLS.com

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