

Apartment Hunting Tips

Before You Set Out:

- 1) **Get ready to search!** You will be making dozens of phone calls and leaving many messages or e-mails. Follow up if messages are not returned.
- 2) **Make a shopping list.** Are you looking for hardwood floors, dishwasher, washer/dryer, fireplace, etc.? You may not find everything but it doesn't hurt to set priorities.
- 3) **Be prepared!** Collect some information that landlords / leasing agents may request. This should include:
 - Credit Check
 - Resume
 - Former Landlords
- 4) **Cover the bases.** Many landlords will want to verify your references. Phone ahead to alert possible references, including your former landlord, that they may receive a call.

During the Search:

- 5) **Dress and groom neatly and conservatively.** In many respects, this process is like a job interview. Landlords of really good units usually have their pick of several applicants. They are looking for:
 - a) Someone both able and responsible enough to pay rent on time.
 - b) People who will treat them and their property with care and respect.
 - c) Quiet tenants who will not be disturbing to other tenants or neighbors.
- 6) **Try to see the units in the daytime.** You'll want to know how much natural light an apartment gets. It's helpful to see what shape and place it is in and whether more work is needed to make it livable.
- 7) **ALWAYS Keep your appointments.** Show up on time. No-shows are a major source of frustration for building managers and landlords.
- 8) **Do a careful walk-through of any unit you're serious about.** The best time to ask about repairs and improvements is before you commit. Attach a list of any damage to the lease, and have it initialed by your landlord so you're not held responsible later.
- 9) **Use the inspection checklist.** Be sure you ask all the necessary questions.
- 10) **Meet the neighbors!** Will you live above or below someone; do you share walls? Knock on doors and introduce yourself. Find out if neighbors are friendly, how they feel about noise, what they like about the neighborhood.
- 11) **Take measurements of your larger furnishings** (and take along a tape measure) to see how your things will fit... or what things you'll need to buy.
- 12) **Visit as many places as you can,** so you'll have a good idea of what your money buys. Then be prepared to ACT QUICKLY when you find something you like!
- 13) **Don't get discouraged!** Finding a great place is not easy, but it is well worth the effort. Keep your chin up, get back on the phone and remember to always sound cheerful.

After You've Found It:

- 14) **Read your lease thoroughly** and make sure you understand it. Don't be afraid to ask! For example:
 - What utilities are you responsible for?
 - Are pets allowed?
 - How is the television reception? Will you need cable?
 - Is there a reference to existing wear or damage or a penalty for breaking the lease?

http://www.springstreet.com/apartments/fyp/reading_room/search/apart_search_tips.jhtml; 18 September 2002.

http://www.springstreet.com/apartments/fyp/reading_room/search/tips_place.jhtml; 18 September 2002.