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Whether you own a home or are looking to buy or sell one, here are some useful tips, ideas and advice. When you're ready to make your move, give me a call or drop me a line.

HOMEOWNERS' ADVICE



HIRING AN INTERIOR DESIGNER

Interior designers are degreed and licensed professionals who make your home more functional and beautiful. If your home could use more space, better traffic flow, or an additional room, an interior designer is your answer.

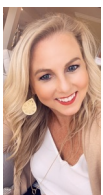
They save you money. Interior designers can buy appliances, furnishings, and more from "to the trade" vendors. While they charge for their time and/or add a mark up to each item you agree to, you'll pay about the same for unique wow-factor results as you would for big-box, off-the-shelf items.

They save you time. The interior designer learns your lifestyle, personal preferences and space concerns. They know the latest products and design solutions, and do the research so you don't have to.

They help you prevent mistakes. An interior design is like a symphony - every detail should compliment everything else in utility and beauty. Designers give you what you want, but they also expand your tastes.

They have resources. Many design solutions must be customized, so designers have their own go-to teams of contractors, upholsterers, artisans and craftspeople.

Most designers offer a free consultation to help you decide if you'll work well together. Contact the American Society of Interior Designers for more information.



Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Towne Realty
Jennifer Dawn
 Realtor
 757-524-0417
jennifer.dawn@bhhstowne.com
ienniferdawnrealestate.com

HOMEBUYERS' ADVICE



FOUR THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU MOVE IN

You're almost done! All that's left to do is to pack up and move in to your first real home. Here are a few tips that will make your first day as a new homeowner easier.

1. **Sort your belongings.** Moving can be more expensive when you cart along items you don't really want or need. A great way to do it is to sort and pack at the same time. Think in terms of three piles - keep, donate, trash. Trash the trash and drop the donations off at the first opportunity. Put your "keep" pile into moving boxes labeled by room.
2. **Plan your storage options.** Closets, attics and cabinets can fill up quickly, especially if you're downsizing. Where will the out-of-season sports gear go? What about holiday decorations? What goes in the garage?
3. **Plan your trip.** Pack your car with necessities, including first aid, drinks, and snacks. Let each family member choose their favorite items to bring, like blankets, pillows, games, books, and a change of clothes, just in case.
4. **Meet your neighbors.** If possible, introduce yourselves to your neighbors before you move. You'll have a greater sense of belonging on moving day.