



# Article Side

Houston apartment search tips by [Patrick O Connor](#)

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Houston apartment leasing agents lease apartments everyday. You don't. Who has the upper hand? The objective of this article is to provide tips on finding a great Houston apartment with a minimal amount of stress. We also hope to even the odds, so you can get an apartment which is right for you at the right price.

1. Start looking for your Houston apartment sooner rather than later. If you are trying to find and lease an apartment in one day, you are negotiating from a position of weakness.
2. Compile information the Houston apartment staff will request when you complete an application. This includes information on recent residences and income.
3. Consider obtaining a credit report if you are concerned about your credit.
4. Plan how much you can spend for your Houston apartment. Be realistic. Your total housing expenses should not exceed 30 to 35% of your household income.
5. Select an online Houston apartment search service. Verify that it has information for all Houston apartments. Some search services only have information on 10 to 15% of the Houston apartments.
6. Think about the location for your Houston apartment. You have to identify the location before you can start a serious search. Factors to consider are the location of your job, family, friends and leisure.
7. Review other factors which are important to you in selecting a Houston apartment. This includes unit type, unit size, unit amenities and property amenities.
8. Use the online Houston apartment search service to select a group of apartments. The initial search should focus on location. Then refine your search based on other criteria which are important to you.
9. Call leasing staff at the Houston apartments you have identified. Have a list of questions. The question should include any factors which are important to you. The objective is to complete a three to five minute interview with the leasing staff at each apartment. After completing the interviews, narrow your list to two or three Houston apartment complexes.
10. Prepare a summary of the most attractive Houston apartments. Write the names of Houston apartments across the top of the page. Write the features most important to you along the left side of the page. Try to put them in descending order. In other words, put the most important issues at the top and the least important issues at the bottom. After completing the summary, you should be able to easily select two or three Houston apartments which best fit your criteria.
11. Visit the properties. Before going to the leasing office, drive around the perimeter of the property. If possible, drive along the interior driveways in the property. If the property passes the "drive test", visit the leasing office. Is the office organized? Is the staff dressed appropriately? Ask to see both a model unit and the unit you would be occupying. Ask detailed questions regarding the issues most important to you. In addition to application fee, deposit and monthly rental rate, ask if they have a move-in special? Ask if they have a look and lease special. (You get a special offer if you lease shortly after initially visiting the property.) Also consider asking about their maintenance

policy, maintenance orders pending for more than one week, if they have a courtesy patrol and if they have operational limited access gates. 12 Take notes as you visit each property. If you don't, the details will tend to blur as you see two or three properties in quick succession.

Decide which property is best for you. Call the leasing agent and confirm your understanding of the details. You may want to ask if they have a special offer if you lease today or tomorrow. (Leasing agents often have some discretion to offer a better deal to close the lease.)

Return to the property and negotiate a lease. The lease is a legal document. You should read it. You're committing to pay rent for a fixed period of time. If you have questions, don't be embarrassed to ask about the details. The lease was written by a lawyer for the benefit of the apartment owner.

Before moving into your apartment, walk through the unit with the on-site staff. Make notes of any defects. Try to do the walk-through several days before you plan to move. This will allow time for the apartment staff to correct any problems.

Ask about what you must do to have your deposit refunded. Apartment residents become very upset when they are denied the return of deposit which they expected to receive. Don't let this happen to you! The management staff at most Houston apartments are fair and honorable. They do not mind returning the deposit if you meet the terms of the lease. Just have a clear discussion regarding how you get the deposit returned.

Yes, there are a number of steps to properly select a Houston apartment. Yes, it can be done with a less effort. However, you are less likely to get an apartment which best fits your needs at a favorable price if you shortcut the relevant steps.

One Since Houston apartment leasing agents negotiate leases daily, it is not realistic for you to know as much about the process as the leasing agent. However, by reviewing an outline of the steps to take, you'll be better prepared to find an apartment which is right for you at the right price.

Two If you have to identify an apartment and sign a lease in one day, you'll be in a hurry. You'll be under pressure to quickly close the deal. You'll be forced to make decisions quickly. You simply cannot find the best apartment at the best price under this type of time pressure.

Three This includes information regarding where you have lived for the last five years, and the name and contact information for your landlords. It also includes information regarding your recent employers, for perhaps three to five years. You will need the name of the employer, when you worked there, how much you earned and a phone number.

Four Some of the issues which cause credit problems are past due payments, a large amount of debt, bankruptcies and a foreclosure. If any of these issues are relevant, discuss them with the leasing agent when you first call the property.

Five When you prepare your budget, try to set aside 10% of your household income for savings. This will allow you to set aside money for a house, your children's education and retirement. It's great to have the very nicest apartment you can afford today. It's even nicer to not have money pressures in the future.

Six These online Houston apartment search services only provide information regarding apartments which pay them to advertise or which pay them a locator fee. It is understandable that they only provide information for which they are paid. However, you have a much better chance of finding the right apartment at the right price if you consider all Houston apartments instead of just the ones that are paying the search service.

Seven Location needs to be your first decision when selecting a Houston apartment. If you change your mind regarding location, you have to start over with the search process. Consider a plainer apartment in a better area instead of a nicer apartment in a less attractive area.

Eight Houston apartments offer an amazing selection of amenities. Use the online Houston apartment search service to identify amenities which are available and which are most important to you. The search service should also help you to select apartments which have the unit type you want.

Nine After selecting an initial group of Houston apartments in the right location, continue to narrow the list. Rank your search criteria in descending order. Use the second-most important search criteria next. Then use the third most important search criteria. When you have selected a group of five to 20 apartments, it is time to start calling the apartments.

Ten Houston apartment leasing staff are trained to ask you to visit the property during the first call. Their objective is primarily to get you to agree to visit the property. However, you are best served by calling all the apartment you identified before you visit any of them.

Eleven Preparing a summary may not seem worthwhile. You certainly do not have to do it. However, it will only take 15 to 30 minutes. And you will effectively organize your thoughts as you complete the summary. When you have completed the summary, you will likely have decided which two or three apartments you should visit.

Twelve When the leasing agents answer your questions, pay attention to what they say and how they say it. In many cases, how they say it is more important than what they say. For example, if they become defensive when you asked about criminal activity at the property, it is probably an issue which should concern you.

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