

Rethinking Home

After spending so much time at home during this pandemic, you are probably seeing all the flaws in your house. Sure, there is the normal stuff, including that dripping faucet, the cracked bathroom tiles, and that carpet that needed replacement years ago.

But there are often bigger issues. Maybe the house no longer fits your needs, especially if you anticipate spending vast amounts of time at home even after the stay-at-home orders expire.

Others also have noticed their homes' shortcomings, according to a REALTOR.com survey (<https://bit.ly/2WuIKIN>). It looked at consumer preferences and how the Covid-19 lockdowns have changed their perception about their wants in a home.

Though survey participants were based in the United States, the feelings likely are shared by people well beyond the U.S. borders, given that so many also have been hunkered down for weeks or months.

It is no surprise that with parks, restaurants, and other gathering places shut down, people are treasuring outdoor space. That is reflected in the survey. When respondents were asked about the features that have gotten more important to them during the pandemic, a wish for a patio or

yard took the number two spot, accounting for 13.2 percent of responses. A quiet neighborhood topped the list (13.4% of responses).

One in five respondents said that more space is the most desired change in their current living situation. Updated kitchens (13%) and home gyms (11.3%) ranked second and third.

Wished-for amenities vary by age, gender, parenting status, and whether respondents were renters or owners.

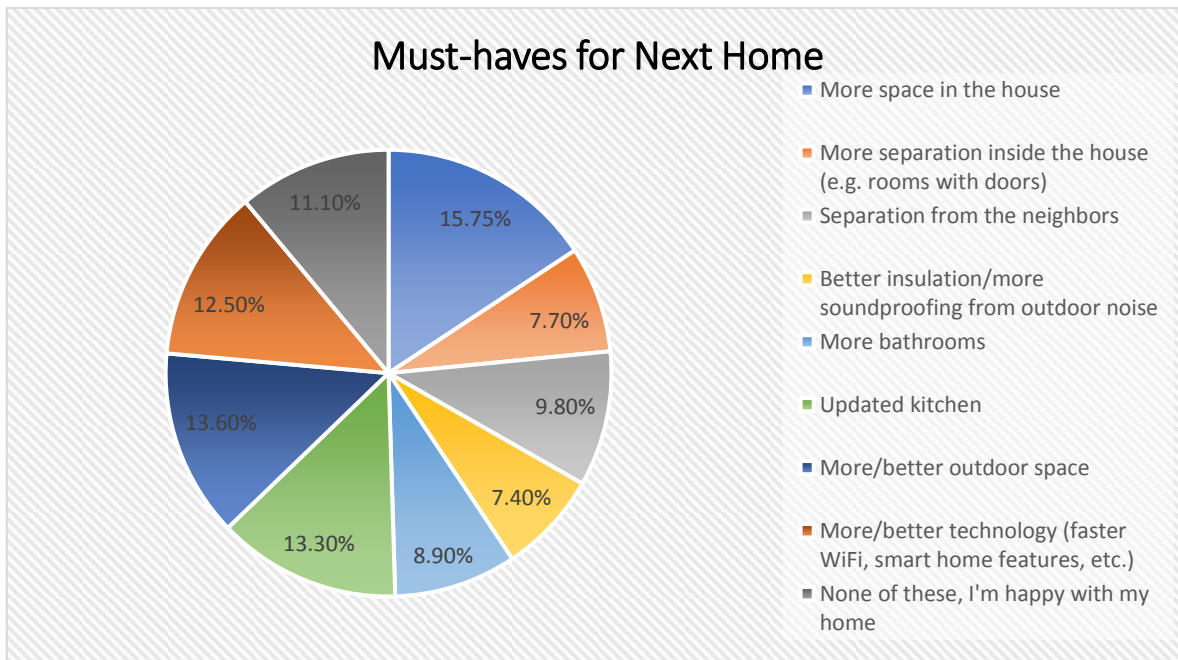
For instance, renters would like a quiet neighborhood, storage, and a spare bedroom.

Parents with young kids' value flexible space like craft areas, game rooms, a home office, and workout space. They are also interested in either an in-law suite or an accessory dwelling unit (ADU).

Kitchen updates, house style, and more space ranked higher with those over the age of 55.

With so many working from home, consumers also say they'd appreciate better technology like faster WiFi and smart home features.

Respondents in the 55-plus age group were the most likely to be content with their current home, yet in a future property, they'd value a bigger house, an updated kitchen, and better technology



Getting connected

One of the most challenging aspects of the stay-at-home orders during this pandemic has been the isolation and separation from family and friends.

Perhaps no group has experienced these feelings of isolation more acutely than seniors.

It's made worse when seniors' access to and ability to operate technology is limited.

Though jumping on a Zoom (the free video conferencing platform) meeting is a cinch for younger people, it can be an enormous challenge for some seniors.

There's help for seniors who want to learn to better understand and use Zoom.

Planet Seniors offers a written step-by-step guide in English, Spanish, and Chinese, (<https://bit.ly/2LvclKE>) that you can use to walk the senior in your life through the set-up.

This video (<https://bit.ly/3burNkR>) provides simple, easy-to-understand directions

Visit the Zoom help center (<https://bit.ly/3dlOxz9>) for details about getting started with and navigating Zoom.

Smart ways to invest \$1,200 stimulus check

If you're lucky enough to not need the Economic Impact Payments authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) – more commonly known as the \$1,200 stimulus check -- for immediate expenses, treat it like a windfall and use it wisely.

Here are three ideas.

1. High-interest debt. Pay off all or some of your credit card debt.

2. Emergency fund. Stoke your emergency fund. It's smart to have three to six months' worth of living expenses in savings.

3. Fund your IRA. Now that the tax filing deadline has been extended to July 15th, you have until then to add money to your Roth or Traditional IRA. For those over the age of 50, the maximum contribution is \$7,000 for 2019

Major Transitions – Selling Your Family Home



Significant changes, like moving, are always tricky, regardless of age. As we get older, we may feel “forced” into moving because we are dealing with more than one stressful situation, such as changes in health, the loss of a spouse, or the movements of adult children.

Yes, change is difficult, and there is comfort in the familiar. But sometimes the familiar becomes problematic, and change is required to make life better.

Consider the bright side of making a change:



Fewer Responsibilities

All the things you had to care for or hire done will no longer fall on your shoulders! A smaller living space means less maintenance, less cleaning, and less effort. Yay!



More Time to Call Your Own

Your to-do list will get significantly shorter the moment you move into your new location. Have you wanted to have more time to read? To watch movies? To travel? To make new friends or spend more time with the old ones? You’ve got it!



A Clean Slate

It’s not often you can “recreate” yourself in life. Do you want to ditch old hobbies and pick up something new? Do you want to dress differently or change your hair? A new location means a unique opportunity to define who you are now, instead of the person others expect you to be. Cut loose!



An Excellent Excuse to Jettison Stuff

You may have to part with some things you like, but you also get to walk away from all the things you don’t. No more guilty feelings about tossing a gift you never really liked. You can stop providing the family’s storage unit. You can keep what you adore and pitch with abandon because you “just won’t have room at the new place.”

Sure, moving to a new home after so many years in this one is challenging. But, if you take charge and call the shots about how it gets done, this is more than a move—it’s an opportunity.

Don’t shy away from deciding how the next chapter of your life will play out. It’s your story. Make it an enjoyable, personal, and colorful one!

Count on an SRES® to guide you through the process of buying or selling your home, making the transaction less stressful and more successful.

The Seniors Real Estate Specialist® (SRES®) designation is awarded by the SRES® Council, a subsidiary of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR).

To learn more about SRES® and access various consumer resources, please visit seniorsresource.realtor.

