



# Robin Talks Real Estate

## *House Hunting How To: 1 Year Out*

*Realtor Robin Jones*

The next few columns are about how to prepare to buy a home. This week is about what you'll need to do one year out to start getting ready. No surprises - it's all about credit.

**Review your credit report.** You can get free copies of your report from Equifax, Experian and TransUnion at [AnnualCreditReport.com](http://AnnualCreditReport.com). It's important to get all three because some may show different things than others. Look carefully for errors. It's up to you to make sure they're removed. They affect your interest rate and even your ability to get a home loan.

**Check your credit score.** Your credit score affects the rates and terms of your loan. Most mortgage lenders use FICO credit scores. Get yours at [MyFico.com](http://MyFico.com). Improve your credit score by paying all bills on time and paying down credit cards and revolving debt. Don't open or close any new accounts once you decide to buy a home.

**Reduce debt.** Get rid of high balance credit cards, store credit cards, payday loans. Not only will these make it harder for you to get a home loan, they should also be a wake up call to get your spending under control.

**Save!** Change your spending habits. Cut out luxuries you don't need. Even a change jar can add up to hundreds of dollars in no time.

**Switch to automatic bill pay.** Late payments drastically drop your credit score so take advantage of automatic bill pay whenever you can.

Next time, what to do at six months out.

**Contact Realtor Robin Jones**

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