REAL LIVING · FREE BUYER'S GUIDE

90 Days to Home Owner

A week-by-week plan for buying your first home in Edmonton, from the first question to the keys.

With Ryan McCann, REALTOR® · 780-964-8445 · ryan@rllv.ca · Book a time to talk

Twelve short weeks in three phases. Each one has the few things that matter, what's different in Edmonton, a short to-do list you can tick right in this PDF, and links to go deeper. Skip any week you've already done.

GET READY · DAYS 1–30		
Week 1	Days 1–7	**Is buying actually right for you?**
Week 2	Days 8–14	**What you can actually afford**
Week 3	Days 15–21	**Get mortgage-ready**
Week 4	Days 22–30	**Define the home**
SEARCH SMART · DAYS 31–60		
Week 5	Days 31–37	**Search like it's your job**
Week 6	Days 38–44	**See homes properly**
Week 7	Days 45–51	**Compare and shortlist**
Week 8	Days 52–60	**Prepare to offer**
OFFER, PROTECT AND CLOSE · DAYS 61–90		
Week 9	Days 61–67	**Understand what you signed**
Week 10	Days 68–74	**Due diligence**
Week 11	Days 75–82	**Get ready to close**
Week 12	Days 83–90	**Walkthrough, possession and the first year**

Where are you starting?

Tick what's already true. Each unticked line points to the week that covers it; start with the earliest.

- [ ] My income has been steady for a year, or I have two years of tax returns if self-employed. — Week 1
- [ ] I know what I'd be comfortable paying each month for housing. — Week 2
- [ ] I have at least 5% of a likely price saved, plus money for closing costs. — Week 2
- [ ] My payments are on time and my cards aren't near their limits. — Week 3
- [ ] I've spoken with a lender or broker, or I have a pre-approval. — Week 3
- [ ] I know which kind of home and which parts of the city I'd consider. — Week 4
- [ ] I plan to stay at least five years. — Week 1

WEEK 1 · DAYS 1–7

Is buying actually right for you?

An honest yes, not yet, or no before any money talk.

Is the want yours? Buying because friends are, or because rent feels wasted, isn't a reason. Wanting a place you control for years is.

Plan to stay about five years. Buying and selling costs money each time, and a short stay rarely earns it back.

Rent isn't money thrown away. It buys flexibility and no repair bills. Compare the two honestly.

Stable income, by a lender's definition. Probation, new self-employment or commission-only income can change the timing. It rarely changes the answer.

Buying with someone? Agree on the budget, and on how you'll decide under time pressure, before you see a single home.

> IN EDMONTON
> Edmonton prices sit well below Calgary, Toronto and Vancouver, and Alberta has no provincial land transfer tax. Ninety days from first question to keys is realistic here.

THIS WEEK

- [ ] Write down the month you'd like to move
- [ ] Write down what you pay for housing today, all in
- [ ] Write down what would have to be true for you to feel ready

READ MORE

→Why buy in Edmonton in 2026

→Buying with Ryan

WEEK 2 · DAYS 8–14

What you can actually afford

Replace what a lender will approve with what you're comfortable paying.

Two ratios decide it. Housing costs (mortgage, property tax, heat and half of any condo fee) up to 39% of gross income. All debts together up to 44%.

The stress test. You qualify at the higher of 5.25% or your rate plus 2%. It's why your own math and the lender's answer often differ.

Down payment minimum. 5% of the first $500,000 and 10% of the portion above it, up to $1.5 million. Under 20% down, mortgage default insurance is required and is normally added to the mortgage.

Your number is yours. Pick the most you'd be content paying in an ordinary month, not the most you could survive.

> IN EDMONTON
> Property tax is billed once a year; the City's Property Tax Monthly Payment Plan spreads it out. Condo fees vary building to building, and so does what they cover. Ask what the home cost to heat last winter.

THIS WEEK

- [ ] Fill in the affordability snapshot
- [ ] Run your numbers in the mortgage calculator
- [ ] Settle on a price ceiling you'd be content with

READ MORE

→Mortgage calculator

→Edmonton property taxes and GST rebates

Affordability snapshot

Rough numbers are fine. A lender will firm them up in Week 3.

Household income before tax, yearly		Comfortable monthly housing cost	
Monthly debt payments		Lender's maximum price	
Down payment saved		My price ceiling	
Saved for closing costs		Monthly payment at my ceiling	

WEEK 3 · DAYS 15–21

Get mortgage-ready

Documents gathered, down payment sourced, credit protected, pre-approval in writing.

Only one kind of pre-approval counts. A pre-qualification is a conversation. A pre-approval reviews your documents and usually holds a rate for a period.

Gather documents once. ID, a job letter, recent pay stubs, two years of tax slips and notices of assessment, and 90 days of statements for the down payment.

The down payment needs a paper trail. Money should sit in your accounts for 90 days, or come with a signed gift letter.

Use the registered accounts. An FHSA takes up to $8,000 a year, $40,000 in total. The Home Buyers' Plan lets you withdraw up to $60,000 from RRSPs, repaid over 15 years.

Protect your credit until possession. No new car, no new cards, no missed payments. Lenders check again before closing.

> **IN EDMONTON**
> Alberta credit unions are worth a quote next to a bank and a broker. The federal stress test binds federally regulated lenders, so ask a credit union how it qualifies you.

THIS WEEK

- [ ] Work through the pre-approval documents checklist
- [ ] Book two lender or broker meetings
- [ ] Ask about rate holds, prepayment and the penalty to break
- [ ] Get the pre-approval in writing

READ MORE

→Pre-approval documents checklist
→Bill C-4 for first-time buyers
→What the 2026 federal budget means here

WEEK 4 · DAYS 22–30

Define the home

A search specific enough to filter with, and a needs list that survives real homes.

Needs and wants are different. A need is something whose absence makes the home wrong. Keep three to five, and rank them.

Property type is a cost decision. Condo, townhouse, duplex or detached: the real differences are control, upkeep and what the monthly fee covers.

Look five years out. Kids, a dog, a second car, working from home. Notice the obvious before it costs you a move.

> **IN EDMONTON**
> Mature neighbourhoods give bigger lots, trees, shorter commutes and older systems. New suburbs give efficient builds and attached garages, with longer drives. A garage is a January decision here, and much of the city's rent-comparable stock is condo and townhouse.

THIS WEEK

- [ ] Rank your needs, three to five at most
- [ ] Pick two to four areas to search
- [ ] Write down your dealbreakers

READ MORE

→Detached homes vs condos
→Affordable neighbourhoods in 2026
→Home prices by neighbourhood

WEEK 5 · DAYS 31–37

Search like it's your job

A repeatable routine instead of scrolling listings at midnight.

Save the search, then let it come to you. Every MLS® listing on reallivinghomes.ca comes from the board's feed. Alerts beat refreshing.

Read past the price. Days on market, price changes, the condo fee and what it covers, taxes and year built say more.

Keep the shortlist short. Five homes at most. Check alerts once a day and delete what doesn't fit.

Nothing showing up? It's usually a filter. Widen the areas or property types before raising the price.

Bring in a buyer's agent now. Ask how they're paid and what representation means before you sign anything.

> IN EDMONTON
> Days on market vary a lot by area and type. A home that has sat for a while can leave room to negotiate.

THIS WEEK

- [ ] Save a search and turn on new-listing alerts
- [ ] Set a daily time to check them
- [ ] Book a buyer consultation

READ MORE

→Condos under $300,000
→Condos under $400,000
→Houses under $400,000
→How to choose a REALTOR®

WEEK 6 · DAYS 38–44

See homes properly

Walk into a showing with a system, and leave with notes you can compare.

Use your nose first. Damp, smoke, pets, or air freshener working hard. Then look under sinks, at ceilings and at basement walls.

Ask for facts. Roof age, furnace age, what's included, and why the seller is moving.

Cosmetic is optional. Paint, floors and counters are predictable costs. Water, structure and systems are not.

Go back at a different time. Drive the street on a weekday evening before you offer.

> IN EDMONTON
> Much of Edmonton sits on clay that moves foundations, so look for cracks and sloping floors. Furnaces and hot water tanks near the end of their life are a near-term cost. Some older wiring and plumbing affects insurance.

THIS WEEK

- [ ] Take the home showing checklist to every viewing
- [ ] Score each home the same day you see it

READ MORE

→Home showing checklist
→New vs old homes in the same area

WEEK 7 · DAYS 45–51

Compare and shortlist

Rank your top homes on total cost and fit, not on the one you saw last.

The last house always wins. Memory favours the most recent showing. Score every home on the same sheet.

Compare total monthly cost. Mortgage, property tax, heat and utilities, condo fee, insurance and a maintenance reserve.

Budget for upkeep. Roofs, furnaces and tanks wear out. A common rule of thumb is 1% to 2% of the price a year.

Know what you can't change. Location, lot, light and layout stay. Almost everything else is a budget question.

> IN EDMONTON
> Property tax follows the City's assessed value, so it can differ between similar homes. Never compare two condo fees without comparing what they cover.

THIS WEEK

- [ ] Fill in the comparison sheet for your top three
- [ ] Show it to whoever is deciding with you

READ MORE

→Condo fees: what they buy

Compare your top three

Monthly figures. Use the same assumptions for every home.

	HOME 1	HOME 2	HOME 3
Address			
Price			
Mortgage payment			
Property tax			
Condo fee			
Heat and utilities			
Insurance			
Maintenance reserve			
Total per month			
Needs met (of 5)			
Gut score (1–10)			

Found one worth an offer?

Before you write it, let's look at what similar homes sold for and what the seller is likely to accept. It costs you nothing to ask.

Call or text 780-964-8445
ryan@rllv.ca
Book a time to talk

WEEK 8 · DAYS 52–60

Prepare to offer

Understand every part of an Alberta offer before there's a deadline on one.

Price is one of six terms. Price, deposit, conditions, condition dates, possession date and included goods all count to a seller.

A deposit isn't extra money. It's the first part of your down payment. In Edmonton it usually runs 1% to 2% of the price, held in trust by the seller's brokerage.

Conditions protect your deposit. Financing, inspection, condo documents, insurance. While they're live, the deposit is refundable.

Decide your walk-away price first. Before you hear about a competing offer, not after.

"As is" means what it says. With no conditions, whatever turns up is yours.

> IN EDMONTON
> Alberta purchases use the standard Residential Purchase Contract. By contract, possession is 12 noon on completion day. Most disputes are about goods: the garage heater, the shed, appliances, window coverings and anything mounted to a wall. List them.

THIS WEEK

- [ ] Line up a lawyer and an inspector before you offer
- [ ] Write down your walk-away price
- [ ] List every item you expect to stay

READ MORE

→Offer presentation windows

→How appraisals differ, condo vs house

OFFER, PROTECT AND CLOSE DAYS 61–90

WEEK 9 · DAYS 61–67

Understand what you signed

Read the contract with comprehension, not dread, and get every deadline on one calendar.

The contract has a shape. It's a standard form, not written by the other side. Learn it once: price, deposit, conditions, dates, goods, possession.

Deals die on dates, not price. Conditions expire at a set time. Financing needs an appraisal, and that takes days you don't control.

Don't understand a clause? Stop and ask your agent or lawyer while it still matters.

> IN EDMONTON
> Your lawyer registers the transfer and your mortgage with Alberta Land Titles. Ask whether the property comes with a Real Property Report with City compliance or with title insurance, and what each covers. Condo documents get their own review period. REALTORS® here are regulated by the Real Estate Council of Alberta (RECA).

THIS WEEK

- [ ] Fill in the key dates sheet
- [ ] Send the contract to your lawyer the day it's accepted

READ MORE

→Condo document review checklist

Key dates

Copy every date from the contract. Tick each one off when it's done.

WHAT	DATE AND TIME	WHO HANDLES IT	DONE
Offer accepted			☐
Deposit due			☐
Inspection condition			☐
Financing condition			☐
Condo documents condition			☐
Insurance condition			☐
Lawyer appointment			☐
Possession			☐

WEEK 10 · DAYS 68–74

Due diligence

Use the condition period properly, then remove conditions on evidence, not hope.

Attend the inspection. It's a visual check of roof, foundation, plumbing, electrical, heating and insulation, and it takes a few hours.

Every report has a list. Sort findings into safety, water, systems and cosmetic before reacting.

Then pick one of four. Proceed, ask for a lower price, ask for a repair, or walk away.

Condo documents come first. Reserve fund study, minutes, budget, bylaws and special assessments deserve more time than the inspection.

Confirm money and insurance. Make sure the lender's appraisal is done and get a real insurance quote on this address before conditions come off.

> IN EDMONTON
> Ask your insurer about sewer backup and overland water coverage. In older condo buildings, check the reserve fund against the work coming up. Radon is common here; Health Canada's action level is 200 becquerels per cubic metre, so test once you move in.

THIS WEEK

- ☐ Book the inspection the day the offer is accepted
- ☐ Review condo documents with the checklist
- ☐ Get an insurance quote on the address
- ☐ Remove conditions in writing, on purpose

READ MORE

→Condo document review checklist
→Condo buying 101

WEEK 11 · DAYS 75–82

Get ready to close

Money, keys, utilities and movers lined up, with no cash surprises.

Closing costs are cash. Legal fees, Land Titles fees, tax and condo fee adjustments, insurance and moving all come on top of the down payment.

Land Titles fees. The transfer is $50 plus $5 per $5,000 of value. The mortgage is $50 plus $5 per $5,000 borrowed.

Meet your lawyer about a week before possession. You sign, and you bring funds the way your lawyer tells you. There's no “closing company” in Alberta; a request to wire money to one is a common fraud.

Insurance before possession. Your lender won't release funds without proof the policy is in place.

> **IN EDMONTON**
> EPCOR can set up power, water and natural gas in your name from possession day, or you can choose another retailer for power and gas. Change your driver's licence address within 14 days, in person at a registry. Book movers early; month-end fills first.

THIS WEEK

- [ ] Fill in the closing cost estimate
- [ ] Bind home insurance
- [ ] Set up utilities from possession day
- [ ] Book movers and internet

READ MORE

→Closing costs for first-time buyers

→Condo move-in fees

→Moving checklist

Closing cost estimate

Cash you'll need on top of your down payment. Your lawyer will give you the final figure.

Legal fees and disbursements		Inspection and condo document review	
Land Titles transfer fee		Moving	
Land Titles mortgage fee		Utility hookups and deposits	
Property tax and condo fee adjustments		Total cash needed	
Home insurance		Cash I have set aside	

WEEK 12 · DAYS 83–90

Walkthrough, possession and the first year

Take possession without surprises, and leave with a plan for owning.

The walkthrough is a check, not an inspection. Included goods are there, nothing new is broken, and the home is empty as agreed.

Something wrong? Raise it through your agent and lawyer before possession completes.

Keys come after the money. Funds move between lawyers and the transfer registers first, so plan the truck for the afternoon.

The first 48 hours. Change or rekey the locks, find the water shut-off and electrical panel, test smoke and CO alarms, read the meters.

> **IN EDMONTON**
> Service the furnace in September, before the first cold snap. New construction carries Alberta warranty coverage: 1 year on labour and materials, 2 years on delivery and distribution systems, 5 years on the building envelope and 10 years on structure.

THIS WEEK

- [ ] Do the walkthrough with your included-goods list
- [ ] Work through the first 48 hours
- [ ] Put the seasonal maintenance list on your calendar

READ MORE

→Home maintenance checklist

→New build checklist

When you're ready, I'm here

Every week of this guide goes faster with someone who does it daily. Call, text or email me, or start a search below.



Ryan McCann, REALTOR®

Real Living, MaxWell Polaris. Questions at any week? Ask.

Call or text 780-964-8445

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Book a time to talk

Start a search

→Condos under $300,000

→Condos under $400,000

→Houses under $400,000

→Houses under $500,000

Checklists

→Mortgage pre-approval documents

→Home showing checklist

→Condo document review

→Buying a new build

→Week-by-week moving checklist

→Home maintenance, season by season

Tools

→Mortgage calculator

→Prices by neighbourhood

→Edmonton market report

→Edmonton condo buildings

→Ryan's listings

→The Real Living blog

Notes

Real Living, MaxWell Polaris, 4107 99 Street, Edmonton, AB T6E 3N4 · brokerage 780-450-6300. General information, not legal, tax or mortgage advice; confirm your situation with your lender and lawyer. Figures checked August 2026: CMHC debt ratios, OSFI minimum qualifying rate, Finance Canada down payment rules, CRA FHSA and Home Buyers' Plan limits, Alberta Land Titles fees, Health Canada radon guideline. Updated November 2026.