



Winter Is Best Time to Sell, Study Shows

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The housing market doesn't hibernate in the winter. Sellers who list and buyers who buy often find the winter season the most advantageous time to make a move in real estate, according to a new study by the real estate brokerage Redfin. The winter season officially takes place between Dec. 21 and March 20, and real estate professionals should be ready for a season that often brings in more focused and active sellers and buyers.

Winter Sales

[Rush to Buy Homes During the Holidays?](#)

[Tips for Selling a Home in the Winter](#)

[Making the Most of Your Buyers' Winter Search](#)

[Staging Tips: Cold Weather, Warm Home](#)

[The Dos and Don'ts of Holiday Listings](#)

In an update to a two-year analysis it completed last year, Redfin researchers studied nationwide home listings, sales prices, and time-on-market data from 2010 through October 2014.

The study found that February is "historically the best month to list, with an average of 66 percent of homes listed then selling within 90 days," according to Redfin's research.

Even in cold weather cities – such as Boston and Chicago – researchers found that home sellers were better off listing their homes in the winter than during other seasons.

The winter tends to net sellers' more than their asking price during the months of December, January, February, and March than listings from June through November. Listing during those four winter months has resulted in higher percentages of above-asking-price sales than listing during any months, other than April and May.

Redfin researchers found that in 2012 December listings were producing the highest percentage of above-asking sales for the entire year at 17 percent.

Researchers say the winter market is less competitive for sellers since many people tend to wait until the spring to list. The smaller inventory of active listings help sellers get more attention from buyers on their properties. Also, many large corporations often transfer employees or hire new ones early in the year, creating opportunities for winter sellers from very motivated purchasers.

Homes that are "priced right and show well can sell any time" of the year, says Nela Richardson, chief economist for Redfin. Winter buyers tend to be "serious buyers... Most people are not window-shopping" in December and January, like they do in the spring months, Richardson adds.

Sellers shouldn't worry about the holidays hampering their chances either. A [2011 study conducted by realtor.com](#) found that 60 percent of real estate professionals advise their sellers to list a home during the holidays because they believe it's an opportune time to sell. Nearly 80 percent of the real estate professionals surveyed said that more serious buyers emerge during the holidays, and 61 percent say less competition from other properties makes it an ideal time to sell.

As for buyers, they may find winter a good time to make a move too. Sellers often are more flexible about negotiations over prices and terms than they would in the spring, real estate professionals say.

"People get more realistic at this time of year," particularly if their homes hadn't sold during the summer and fall, says Mary Bayat, a broker in Washington, D.C., and chairwoman-elect of the Northern Virginia Association of REALTORS®.

Source: ["Best Time to List a Home for Sale? Winter, Redfin Says."](#) Los Angeles Times (Dec. 14, 2014)