



## cal rentals

2610 Channing Way  
Berkeley, CA 94720-2272

**HOURS:**  
Monday–Friday,  
10 a.m. – 4 p.m., excluding  
official University holidays

**WEB SITE:**  
[calrentals.berkeley.edu](http://calrentals.berkeley.edu)

**E-MAIL:**  
[homeinfo@berkeley.edu](mailto:homeinfo@berkeley.edu)

**PHONE:**  
(510) 642-3644

# top 10 house-hunting tips

Cal Rentals is the University's housing counseling and rental listing service. If you are a Cal student or a newcomer to the Bay Area and have never looked for rental housing locally before, these tips will be helpful.

### 1. A lot of housing options are advertised for immediate occupancy.

Your search should begin no earlier than four to six weeks prior to your targeted move-in date. In the current housing market, it is likely you will secure housing well within a month, but you may want to build in a little extra time to search if you are new to this process. In some cases, you can start your search a month or two in advance, depending how early the landlords post their listings. Either way, be sure to start your search for housing before it's too late!

### 2. Shared housing is the most affordable housing and the easiest to secure.

Shared housing is where you get your own room in a shared apartment or house (usually with other students). A similar category is Room Rentals. If you're on an especially tight budget, consider a Work Exchange, which is usually a room rental in exchange for approximately 10 to 15 hours a week of work such as child care, gardening, manuscript typing, etc.

### 3. Rentals with three or more bedrooms are harder to find.

If you have your heart set on finding a rental that has three or more bedrooms, be aware that local rental housing consists primarily of small units with two bedrooms or fewer. Be prepared for a longer search and consider communities outside of Berkeley if you can. If you are looking with a group of people, be sure to read "Seeking with Friends." Students should enlist the help of parents or guardians for the search process if you can, especially if parents/guardians will pay all or part of your rent.

### 4. Get a good map.

Maps are available from campus bookstores or online (Google Maps for example). Although all of our listings are pinpointed on an online map, it's a good idea to view the whole area within three to five miles of campus just to have a general idea of where places are located.

### 5. Be accessible by phone.

You will be leaving lots of messages with landlords and some will call you back. If you aren't available, landlords simply will go to the next prospective tenant on their list. A cell phone that you carry with you at all times is best. (Cal Rentals has information on how to rent a cell phone locally.)

**6. Script a short, positive statement about yourself** that you can leave as a telephone message to landlords to encourage a landlord to call you back. Repeat your name and telephone number slowly and clearly. Express an eagerness to see the rental. Offer to accept a collect call if the landlord must call you back long-distance.

*continued*



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**7. Show up on time for your housing appointments and dress neatly.**

You don't need to wear a suit, but dress well. When you rent, you are entering into a business contract with your landlord, so you want to look responsible. If you can't show up for your appointment, please call the landlord and explain what happened. This is simply common courtesy, and we want landlords to be impressed with Cal students.

**8. Look for safety features, such as working smoke detectors and deadbolt locks on exterior doors,** and do not rent a place if you feel it is unsafe. However, cosmetic defects or minor problems (for example, a stain on the carpet or a drippy faucet) are best left for discussion with the landlord after you have signed a rental agreement. Requests for repairs should always be dated and in writing, and be sure to keep copies of any correspondence with your landlord.

**9. Prepare a tenant resume,** such as the form we offer in Cal Rentals. This will demonstrate to a landlord where your income is coming from and how you will be responsible for the rent. Make several copies and bring them with you when you look at housing.

**10. Consult with a Cal Rentals counselor** if you are having difficulty. Sometimes a minor adjustment to your search is all that is needed to create a winning situation for you. Good luck!