

The Condo Lifestyle



Eastbrook**HOMES**

A Breakdown of Terms, Tips, & Takeaways

Welcome to our interactive condo guide!

Are you seeking a low-maintenance lifestyle, amenities at your fingertips, and a close, welcoming community full of opportunities for lifelong relationships? If so, condo living might be the perfect fit for you! Eastbrook Homes invites you to explore your condo compatibility with our Interactive Condo Guide. Together, we'll walk through some unique, essential condo terms, strategies, and tips every homeowner needs to know when considering a switch to the condo lifestyle.

What this guide will cover:

Common Condo-Specific Terms

Tips for Buying a Condo

The Pros and Cons of Condos

Additional Resources

TIP!

Our Eastbrook Homes Interactive Condo Guide is a living document intended to accompany you on your condo journey. Throughout this guide, we'll showcase unique characteristics, inclusions, and condo terms that help determine whether or not a condo is the right fit for your lifestyle. We suggest taking note of anything that stands out, encourages deeper examination, or inspires additional investigation. [Eastbrook Homes is here](#) to answer any questions and ensure you find the perfect home for your individual needs and home goals.



First Up: The Terms

Condo living differs in many ways from apartment rentals and single-family homes. Let's walk through a few important, condo-specific terms to get started.

Condominium

A condominium (or "condo" for short), is an individually-owned unit among a collection of units. Condos can be detached, attached to other units on only one side, or attached on both sides. Together they form a community of homes that may share amenities like fitness centers, pools, clubhouses, or parks. The primary difference between a condo and an apartment is that an apartment is rented, whereas a condo is owned by the homeowner.

HOA

A Homeowners Association (commonly referred to by the abbreviation, "HOA") is a group of board members elected by homeowners to establish, maintain, and enforce community rules and maintenance requirements. Depending on the condo community, [an HOA assists](#) with things like snow removal contracts, landscape requirements, outdoor amenity maintenance, exterior change requests, and utilities. Prospective condo owners are highly encouraged to review HOA bylaws and regulations before purchasing a condo to ensure the community aligns with their needs.

Bylaws

Condo bylaws are written, legally-binding documents outlining an HOA's rules, conditions, and requirements. They contain everything homeowners and HOA board members need to protect the health, welfare, property values, and aesthetics of their community. Bylaws are typically accessible to potential condo buyers ahead of time and copies are included within closing documents when purchasing your home.

[More on next page...]



Low-Maintenance

At Eastbrook Homes, a low-maintenance lifestyle means our condo owners spend less time on maintenance work. At our condo communities, this could include things like shoveling snow, mowing the lawn, pulling weeds, mulching trees, or watering the landscape. Low-maintenance condos allow our homeowners to spend less time maintaining the exterior of their homes and more time relaxing, traveling, or enjoying personal time.

Attached Condominium

An attached condo is physically attached on one or more sides to another condo unit. Homeowners share at least one wall with the unit beside them and sometimes share other common areas like driveway space, sidewalks, and yards. All Eastbrook Homes attached condos feature Open-Cell Foam insulation to reduce noise transference between walls. Open-Cell Foam forms a continuous air barrier, sealing leaks and preventing both active and passive heat transfer. Open-Cell Foam Insulation also improves indoor air quality by reducing infiltration of outdoor allergens. Just another way building with Eastbrook saves you money and improves your quality of life!

Detached Condominium

A detached condo stands alone and doesn't share any walls with the units next door. Like with attached condos, detached condo owners own the unit itself but not the land it sits on. The same rules and regulations for attached condo living also apply to detached condos; shared exterior space is still low-maintenance and shared with other condo owners in the community regardless of whether your condo is attached or detached.



TIP!

Did you know condos can be a great investment for both new and experienced homeowners? Condos help new homeowners maximize their credit potential by offering affordable real estate investment opportunities that appreciate in value over time. Condos also require minimal outdoor maintenance and upkeep, making them a great vacation home for experienced homeowners looking for an easy-to-care-for retreat.



Need help on...?

Run across a condo term, contract line, or HOA rule you don't understand? We can help! Jot your questions down and give one of Eastbrook's experienced Sales Agents a call for more info! Find our phone number, email address, and [website](#) at the end of this guide.

Tips for Buying a Condo

Buying a condo is different from signing a rental agreement or purchasing a single-family home. Condos come with added details that require careful consideration to ensure everyone is on the same page and knows what to expect. Eastbrook Homes recommends investing time in a carefully curated strategy of personal reflection and straightforward questions to maximize your time and make the most of your condo buying experience.

Identify Your Unique Lifestyle Needs

The most important step in buying a condo is determining your specific, individual home needs. Are you ok sharing a wall with your neighbors or is a detached condo more aligned with your needs? Are you looking for single-level home plans or would you prefer two floors with another bedroom and bath? Which cities best match your needs in terms of commute, education, and recreation opportunities? Identifying these specifics before you start condo shopping saves you time and helps narrow down your options.



Need help on...?

Top 5 Lifestyle Characteristics

Which elements of your lifestyle most impact your housing needs?

5 Must-Have Condo Features

Which elements of condo living rank highest on your priority list? *Hint - Consider things like snow removal, parking, and community location.



TIP!



Eastbrook Homes offers a variety of [traditional condo communities](#), as well as [townhomes](#) and our newest [Courtyard Homes](#), which offer the condo lifestyle with a private, fenced-in courtyard.

Prioritize Your Amenities

One of the best things about condo living is access to fantastic amenities, depending on what community you're interested in. Is an in-ground community pool high on your wishlist? Maybe you dream of hosting holiday parties in a shared community clubhouse or gazebo? Eastbrook proudly offers a number of communities with amenities stretching from fitness centers and scenic [golf course views](#) to nature-filled parks and [lakeside retreats](#). Prioritize your amenities in order of importance to help narrow down your options. Seeking more info about West Michigan and Greater Lansing Area attractions, features, and citywide amenities? Check out the Eastbrook Homes [city feature pages](#) on our website to learn about the incredible amenities waiting just outside your condo's front door.

Consider Special Assessments

Special assessments are additional fees HOA's charge for association projects which are voted and agreed upon by the HOA Board of Directors. Special assessments don't often happen, but it's good to ask about them ahead of time as they can impact your budget. Another good way to research your HOA is by requesting and reviewing the HOA's financial reports from the last three years (if applicable) and looking at how the community budget is funded, how long it's been operating for, and other factors. If you have a brand-new community, the HOA will be brand new as well and may look different on the financial reports than older communities would.



Top 3 Condo Amenities

Is an outdoor pool important to you? Do you need to live within walking distance of local parks or downtown areas? List your top 3 amenities here!

Familiarize Yourself with
HOA Fees and Rules

It's incredibly important to understand what you're buying before you buy it. Ask to review the HOA's bylaws and fees ahead of time, paying close attention to fee inclusions, exceptions, and fee rate increases year after year. Sometimes an HOA's rules or fee structure simply doesn't align with your needs - and that's ok! It's better to keep searching and find a more compatible community than live among rules you don't agree with and fees you cannot afford.

Understand What's Included

It's important to know which aspects of condo living are included in your HOA fees and which are not! We've included a checklist of possible inclusions for you to ask about. Feel free to add your own items, too!



TIP!

Did you know Eastbrook Homes offers a variety of **traditional condo communities**, as well as **townhomes** and our newest **Courtyard Homes**, which offer the condo lifestyle with a private, fenced-in courtyard.



Need help on...?

Ask about:

Included Amenities

Extra Paid For Amenities

Guest Parking

Signage

Fencing

Pets

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Inclusions Checklist:

Trash

Recycling

Internet

Water

Sewer

Snow Removal

Lawn Maintenance

Mulch

Irrigation Water and Maintenance

Common Space Maintenance

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Budget Considerations

What inclusions or extras are you hoping are included in your HOA payments? Don't forget to account for yearly HOA fee increase possibilities!

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Takeaways

Still on the fence about whether the condo lifestyle is a good fit for you? Take a moment to create a personalized pros and cons list outlining each element of condo living. Once you've gathered all your ideas in one space, prioritize the aspects of buying a condo that speak to your needs, eliminate items that don't, and step back to reflect on a complete picture of your condo compatibility.

Pros

Equity

A condo allows you to build personal equity and grow your investment potential through real estate ownership.

Community

Condo communities are tight-knit, welcoming opportunities to form lifelong relationships with like-minded individuals and families.

Security

Condos present matching exterior appearances and close neighbors, making them ideal housing options for people who travel often and leave their homes unattended.

Maintenance

Condos offer a low-maintenance lifestyle so you spend less time working in the yard and more time relaxing and exploring.

Affordability

Condos are typically less expensive than single-family homes, offering homebuyers the opportunity to invest in real estate at a variety of income levels.

Amenities

Condo communities offer a plethora of activities and amenities for people of all ages - and most are included in your condo purchase at no additional cost to you!

Make a Pros and Cons List - We'll get you started!

Cons

HOA Rules and Fees

HOA bylaws are legally binding and require agreement by all members of the community. If you don't agree with community rules and fees, a condo (or any home within an HOA-managed community!) might not be the best fit for you.

No Land Ownership

While condo owners often reap the rewards of investing in real estate, their investment is limited to just the unit itself. Condo owners do not own the property outside their condo. If you're looking to invest in land, a condo is not the right match for your needs.



List Your Pros

What 5 attributes of buying a condo are most appealing to you?

[illegible]

List Your Cons

Which condo characteristics cause you concern or hesitation?

[illegible]

TIP!



Want to inject a bit of fun into your condo pros and cons list? Involve the family! Brainstorm a few imaginative elements to consider, like whether or not winning “Best Pie Recipe” at the condo community’s bake off is a pro (fame and glory!) or con (hundreds of requests for home-baked pies!) or whether or not the kids want to risk growing mermaid tails by living lakeside. Add some silliness alongside the seriousness to keep the process enjoyable from start to finish.

Additional Resources

Seeking additional resources? Eastbrook Homes has you covered! Between our online blog posts and Eastbrook University articles, we have everything you need to execute your condo-buying decisions with knowledge and confidence.

Head over to our blog to help assess whether or not you're [ready to downsize](#) or to get expert advice on [how to relocate](#) your home and family to a new place.



Interested in learning more about HOAs from an actual HOA manager? Check out Eastbrook University's [HOA 101](#) article for all the insider advice you're looking for.

TIP!

Ready to experience Eastbrook's condos in person? [Schedule a model home tour](#) or check out our [Homeowner Highlights](#) to see real-world examples of the low-maintenance condo lifestyle. Join Marie as she walks you through [her Channing condo](#), read about [Louise and David's Laurel condo](#) (complete with our famous [Michigan room!](#)), and watch [two best friends build attached condos](#) beside each other!

Additional Tip!

Looking to buy? Eastbrook Homes has Move-In Condos ready for you to move into! Check out our available [traditional condos](#), [Townhomes](#), or [Courtyard Homes](#) to find your next dream home!



Questions?

When you have questions, Eastbrook Homes is the perfect place to find answers. Note your final questions here and let's talk!

General Notes