

*First apartment*  
**REALITY CHECK**



*What happens when you find an apartment you love, but it's way outside your spending ratio?*

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**Increase your income** *Is the apartment you found worth taking on a second job or working longer hours?*



**Reconsider your “must-haves”** *Be realistic about your expectations, especially if it’s your first time living on your own; compare many different apartments to understand how much more that extra square footage or that view will cost you*



**Reduce other spending areas** *In some cases, you can justify a higher housing spending ratio if it reduces (or eliminates) another spending category; for example, an apartment near work or school can reduce your monthly transportation costs*

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**Share the space** *Taking on a roommate can give you access to that dream apartment for less money*



**Look in a different location** *Rental rates vary widely across the country; check out the pricing in nearby suburbs and cities to see if a move would make sense in the long run*

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