

Credit Score FAQ: Mortgage Prep

Q1: How can I improve my credit score before buying a home?

Focus on three habits:

1. **Create a simple budget** so payments are always on time.
2. **Pay down existing debt** with a consistent plan.
3. **Monitor your credit reports** and dispute any errors.

Small, steady improvements can add up over time.

Q2: How long does it take to improve a credit score before a mortgage?

It depends on what's driving your score, but many people see progress in a few months with on-time payments and reduced balances. Bigger improvements can take longer, especially after a major negative event. The sooner you start, the better.

Q3: Should I open a new credit card to raise my score before applying for a mortgage?

Usually, it's best to avoid opening new credit accounts right before applying. A new card can change your credit profile and may impact your debt-to-income ratio. If you're close to applying, keep things stable and talk with your lender before making changes.

Q4: Will checking my credit report hurt my score?

No. Checking your own credit report is a *soft inquiry* and does not lower your score. You can review your reports to spot errors, outdated items, or accounts you don't recognize.

Q5: What are common mistakes to avoid before applying for a mortgage?

Avoid taking on new debt, making large purchases on credit, missing payments, or applying for multiple new accounts. These can affect your credit score and/or your debt-to-income ratio during underwriting.

Q6: Are "fast credit repair" services legit?

Be cautious. There aren't real shortcuts to "instantly" fixing credit. If someone promises a guaranteed quick fix, that's a red flag. The most reliable approach is consistent positive payment history, lowering balances, and disputing legitimate errors.

Quick reminder

This FAQ is general education, not financial advice. For guidance specific to your situation, talk with your lender or a qualified credit professional.



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