



Q. Our apartment is across the hall from the elevator and sometimes it gets kind of noisy. What can we do to make it less of an issue when we're trying to sell?

A. Hallway noise, whether from chatty neighbors or the elevator itself, may be an issue for some buyers, but it is usually not a major deterrent to a sale, said Amy Herman-Schechter, a real estate sales representative at Halstead Property in Manhattan.

"It should not be a deal breaker if the noise is in a small portion of the apartment," like a foyer or entrance hallway, she said. "People tend to zone it out."

And most buyers, she added, expect a certain degree of noise in a city like New York.

Still, playing a little soft music may help.

"You don't want to misrepresent the apartment, but I always recommend music during showings because it can create a nice ambience," she said, while drowning out any annoying noises.

But in extreme cases, particularly when the noise is noticeable in the living room or bedroom, the situation can be detrimental to the value, Ms. Herman-Schechter said. "And I would price the apartment accordingly."

Before reducing the price, though, you may want to try soundproofing. Ronan Blee, who owns the New York soundproofing company Quiet Zone, said the best way to keep hallway noise out of an apartment is to seal the air gaps around the front door.

"We use sound-control door seals," he said, which are made of neoprene. "They simply get fastened to the door frame, so when the door closes, the door is

pressed against the seals.” It’s a little like outdoor weatherstripping.

Where the door meets the saddle, Mr. Blee also recommended an automatic door bottom.

“It has a steel rod inside, which presses against the hinge side of the door frame and pushes a neoprene seal down on top of the door saddle when the door is fully closed,” he said. “People also use these for smoke rooms and darkrooms, because it creates a total seal.”

In most cases, he said, “those seals will cut out about 80 to 90 percent of the noise.”

But not all buildings will allow these products, he said, because they have to be installed on the hallway side of the door, which creates a slightly different look from that of the neighboring doors. Check with building management first.

If your front door is made of hollow steel, it may also need additional material applied to the back, Mr. Blee said. He suggested a layer of mass loaded vinyl followed by Green Glue soundproofing compound and another layer of drywall.

Buyers who are truly noise averse may not be satisfied with any of these measures. For them, Ms. Herman-Schechter had one suggestion: “Look outside the city.”

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