**How to Be a Landlord: Top 12 Tips for Success**

12.) **Be Smart About Rent Collection** - Are you still trekking around the city collecting rents from your tenants physically? Stop! Not only is showing up at your (potentially financially strapped and therefore stressed/angry) tenants’ doors possibly dangerous, but it’s incredibly tedious, time-consuming, and inefficient! Instead, check out alternative options, from electronic pay systems to an ACH (automated clearing house) to withdraw money from the tenant’s bank account.

11.) **Start Adding Systems NOW** - You’re just a “mom and pop” landlord looking to make a little side income, right? No need to hone your methods or organize paperwork.

**WRONG**. If your ultimate goal is to achieve more free time and not be tied to your day job (and yes, property management can definitely be a demanding day job), you’ll do yourself a HUGE favor to start building systems now. That way, when you’re the proud owner of 10, 20, maybe even 50 rentals down the road, you’ll be able to step away seamlessly for that early retirement — and your business will still run like a well-oiled machine.

10.) **Be Knowledgeable** - To make property management an easier task, you need to be well equipped to handle the problems that you will face. The best way to do this is through education. [Books](https://www.biggerpockets.com/renewsblog/2013/04/14/best-real-estate-books/), courses, landlord associations and [mentors](https://www.biggerpockets.com/renewsblog/2015/06/20/ultimate-guide-finding-incredible-mentors/) are all great ways to improve your abilities. When you have questions, don’t just shoot from the hip.

9.) **Create a Policy & Stick to it** - If you are running your [rental](https://www.biggerpockets.com/renewsblog/2013/02/22/buying-rental-property/) business off the top of your head, making up the rules as you go, you are opening yourself up for a lot of hassle. Tenants will know if you are making rules up on the spot (no, you cannot pay rent in quarters) so having a written policy — that your tenant has — will make life much easier. Rather than trying to explain why a certain action is not allowed, you simply can refer to the policy. People tend to not question “policy” even if you are the one who created that policy. Once that policy is created, don’t deviate from it.

8.) **Quality Product = Quality Tenants** - While this isn’t a hard and fast perfect rule, in general the quality of your tenant will depend largely on the quality of the home you are providing. In providing a better-than-average home you will set a standard for the kind of tenant you attract and keep. As a landlord, your product is not only the rental itself. Your business is part of the product, and the way you run your business will affect how your tenant views your product. Fix repairs promptly (hire it or not), maintain strict professionalism, and stay organized.

7.) **Set Office Hours** - Do you want to fix repairs at 10:00 at night? How about receiving phone calls at 6:00 a.m.? As a landlord, you get to set your own hours. For instance, you may advise tenants that you are only available between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on weekdays. When they do call outside of office hours, you should allow the call go to voicemail. If it’s important, they’ll leave a message. If not, it probably wasn’t important. The main exception to this policy is when trying to show a unit.

6.) **Get a Google Voice Number** - A neat tip you can also try relating to the previous tip is to sign up for a free [Google Voice](https://www.google.com/voice) account, which supplies you with a phone number that is forwarded to your own cell phone. Give all your tenants this number and set up a business voicemail on that line. All business related calls go to that number but your phone (or multiple different phones) will ring and can be answered. By having a Google Voice number, you can set a schedule of when the phone will ring and when you want it to simply go to voicemail.

5.) **Know When to Outsource** - Many repairs can be easily fixed. Many more cannot. If you are extremely handy with construction and tools you may be tempted to do all the repairs yourself. While this might be a good idea — it also may not. Just because you can do something doesn’t mean you should. In order to be a successful landlord, you need to balance cost savings with enjoyment. If you hate fixing things, don’t fix things. Hire it out. There are too many ways to make money in this world than to be trapped doing something you hate. Depending on the repair that must be made, a licensed contractor may be required and permits from the municipality may have to be drawn.

4.) **Be Organized** - Have all the forms you need organized neatly in your file cabinet, have your procedure written down for all common problems (vacancies, repairs, etc.), and keep your maintenance contacts organized neatly for easy retrieval. Keep current with your accounting. Have a clean office. These and many other organization tools may seem small and trivial, but they are one of the most important ways you can keep your business a business that succeeds. Don’t underestimate organization.

3.) **Always Charge a Late Fee** - It may seem cruel, but you should always charge a late fee — and make it known ahead of time about this policy. Most tenants make a lot more money than just what rent is — but not enough money to live each month. As such, they must constantly prioritize what gets paid and what doesn’t. By being strict with late payments, you place “rent” higher on the priority scale than other obligations. Additionally, the extra income when rent is late is a nice compensation for the stress of not getting rent on time.

2.) **No Family/Friends** – You may get a call from a friend or family member asking ifyouI have any place available for rent. Your answer should always the same: no. Renting to family or friends is one of the most common but most disastrous mistakes many landlords make. Put a “No Family/Friends” into your polices. No more stress from those relationships.

#1.) **Don’t Be The Owner** - Finally, the number the tip for being a successful landlord: don’t be the owner. This is especially true for those of you who are peacemakers and non-confrontational.  As a landlord, you are going to face a lot of tough decisions and awkward conversations. When you are the owner, the blame is on you, and as a result, you will often make decisions based on convenience rather than common sense. (After all, you better not be the owner. The owner should be a business entity that you set up with your attorney.)

Source: www.BiggerPockets.com