

Getting Your Home Ready for the Market

These tips are not meant to overwhelm you, but to help you as you prepare your house for sale. Buyers will gravitate toward a well-maintained, clean home and are looking at these things. They are impressed by a home that shows good care and maintenance.

Exterior

- Mow lawn and ensure grass is green and tidy. Plant seeds in bare spots, pull/eliminate weeds. Edge driveways and sidewalks.
- Clean driveways and sidewalks. Make sure snow is promptly cleared.
- Trim shrubbery, remove dead branches from trees, replace dying bushes.
- Clean all your outdoor furniture, and touch up paint where needed. Place potted flowers outside.
- Keep your front entryway clean and freshly painted including front porch, pillars, stairs, and door.
- Ensure that house numbers, mailbox, and exterior lighting are in good condition.
- Clean all windows and screens and recaulk or repaint where necessary.
- In winter, be sure sidewalks and driveways are clear.
- View your property from across the street to see that everything looks good.
- Check that roof, gutters, downspouts, siding, and chimney look good. Do any cleaning, repainting, and repairing you can.

Kitchen

- Reduce clutter on the countertops. Put extra appliances in the cabinets or storage.
- Sinks, appliances, and countertops should be clean.
- Fix faucet leaks.
- Remove all photos and magnets from the fridge.
- Consider new hardware on cabinets.
- Ceramic tile: thoroughly scrub all the grout, or stain the grout if dingy.
- Put your garbage can away. Often times it is left out in the open at the end of a counter for easy access, but should be put away while your house is on the market.
- Polish all appliances and surfaces.

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Bathroom

- Replace shower curtains and bathroom rugs with something fresh and tasteful. It may be best to remove rugs to show the flooring.
- Fix any faucet leaks or drips.
- Check the caulking around the tub and shower and replace with fresh caulking where necessary.
- Remove the clutter from the counter, including toothbrushes and hang a clean, new hand towel.
- Reduce the amount of personal products in the shower/bath.
- Place the garbage can under the sink.
- Thoroughly clean mirrors, glass, chrome, and porcelain surfaces.

Closets

- Pack away everything that you are not going to need for the next few months.
- Neatly store in boxes in the basement or rent storage space if you don't have a place to store extra items.
- Closets are never big enough and the least amount of items that are taking up space, the larger your closets appear. You may even consider packing things under your beds, as buyers will open closet doors, but they do not typically look under the bed.
- Organize your clothes and shoes neatly on bars and racks. The more organized and clean, the better.
- Doors and drawers should open and close easily. Make sure all tracks are clean and free of obstacles and any squeaks are oiled.

Overall

- Depersonalize and decorate with neutral décor. Buyers want to envision their own belongings in the space.
- Stage your home with your agent's help or hire a professional stager. If there are any awkward or atypical spaces in your home, some buyers may struggle to see the function or "how it should look." Staging will definitely help with that issue.
- Check all the basics around the house – all doors, windows and cabinets – to make sure they don't stick or squeak or are loose, and that all the hardware is in good condition.
- Apply fresh paint where needed. If a room needs repainting, use neutral-toned paint to brighten up the space.
- Carpets, draperies, and furniture should all be professionally cleaned and looking their best. Make sure the window blinds are in good condition, clean, and open.
- Buyers are typically looking for a bright home with lots of light.
- Replace all burned out light bulbs.

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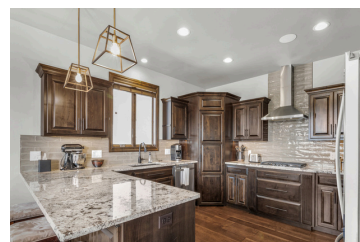
- Clean the fireplace and remove smoke stains from the wall and mantle. Clean your furnace and water heater, and replace furnace filters as needed.
- Make sure your home smells pleasant. Place diffusers or air fresheners with a mild scent around your home. Avoid strong perfume fragrances. Lemon is usually a good option. Placing some cinnamon or other sweet spices on a piece of aluminum foil and warming them in the oven creates a nice smell.
- If you have a nice stereo system in your home, show it off. Play classical or jazz music at a low volume to create a unique showing experience.
- Your home will never be shown without an agent present. However, it is better not to leave valuables out in the open to create temptation. Open houses can become busy and the hosting agent may not be with every potential buyer walking through the home. Lock up any valuables including jewelry, cash, weapons, or any other valuables. Lock up your prescription medications, as this is the number one targeted item of theft.
- As a seller, you must disclose material facts about your property and your title that could reasonably affect the new owner's use and enjoyment of the property. You will complete a Property Condition Statement, often referred to as a disclosure form, which you will need to fill out as thoroughly as possible.
- Consider having a pre-sale home inspection done by a certified inspector. This adds confidence to a buyer, making your home more salable. It also gives you an opportunity to fix any issues prior to a buyer's home inspection so that you are not surprised by requested repairs.
- There are several home protection plans out there both for buyer and sellers. Just like a pre-sale home inspection, purchasing a home protection plan on your home is an added benefit to a buyer and it even protects you while your home is listed and during the pending process. Home protection plans may be available that are free to you as the seller during the listing and pending period of the sale. Ask if you are interested.

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Getting Ready for Photos

Remove these items:

- Trash cans (interior & exterior)
- Magnets from fridge
- Pet food/water
- Pet toys
- Pet cages
- Shampoo and conditioner from shower
- Bath robes
- Towels on racks
- Tooth brushes
- Hair brushes
- Tissue boxes
- Non-decorative soap
- Plungers
- Toilet cleaners
- Grill covers
- Portable fans
- Personal photos



Do:

- Clean throughout the house. Polish appliances, counters, and floors.
- Place decorative, luxury, or new towels in bathrooms.
- Put toilet seats down.
- Turn ceiling fans off.
- Remove or conceal cords.
- Declutter throughout the house. Remove non-decorative items from counters. Minimize the number of appliances on kitchen counters.
- Arrange anything that may distract from the composition such as crooked furniture, messy pillows, distracting rugs, etc.
- Think about how a new / model home is staged and make your home similar.



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