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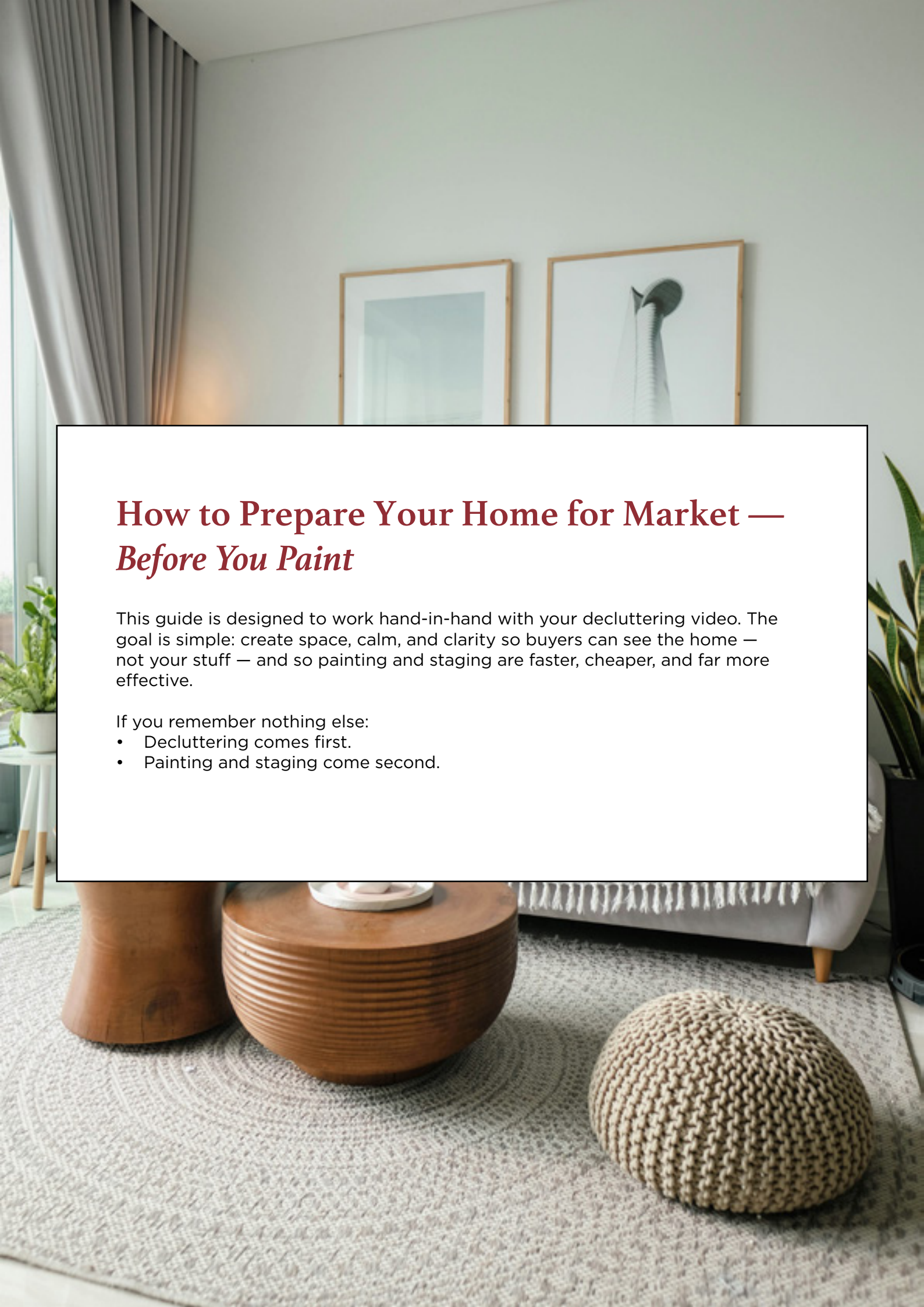
CHRISTIE'S
INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

Pre-Market Interior Decluttering *Guide*

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How to Prepare Your Home for Market — *Before You Paint*

This guide is designed to work hand-in-hand with your decluttering video. The goal is simple: create space, calm, and clarity so buyers can see the home — not your stuff — and so painting and staging are faster, cheaper, and far more effective.

If you remember nothing else:

- Decluttering comes first.
- Painting and staging come second.



Why Decluttering Matters (*More Than You Think*)

Decluttering is not cosmetic — it's strategic.

- Clutter makes rooms feel smaller
- It slows down showings and adds daily stress
- It increases moving costs
- It hides architectural features buyers actually care about

Buyers don't buy square footage.
They buy how a home feels.

Our target aesthetic: Clean. Calm. Minimal. Think “hotel-like,” not “lived-in.”

High-Impact Areas Buyers Focus On First

If time or energy is limited, prioritize these spaces:

1. Main Living Areas
2. Dining Room
3. Kitchen
4. Primary Bedroom & Closet

These rooms set pricing expectations for the entire home.

The Right Order (*Don't Skip This*)

1. Declutter
2. Clean
3. Paint (Decorator's white for trim & ceilings, warm creamy whites for walls)
4. Light staging

Painting before decluttering wastes money.

The Decluttering Method That Actually Works

Work Small. Work Fast. Finish Completely.

Decluttering fails when tasks are too big.

Instead: - Choose one category or micro-area - Set a 15-30 minute timer - Finish it start-to-finish

Example: Kitchen - Pots & pans only

Pull everything out. Remove duplicates or unused items. Sort immediately. Done.

Small wins build momentum.

The Four-Pile System (*Set This Up First*)

You'll need:

- Sturdy boxes
- Clear trash bags
- Black contractor bags
- Labels, tape, markers
- Rags for wiping items
- Two small bowls (loose change / small items)

Create four categories:

1. Keep
2. Donate
3. Sell
4. Recycle / Trash

Tip: - Silver Sharpie for black bags - Black Sharpie for everything else

Decision fatigue is real. This system prevents it.

Room-by-Room Strategy

Step 1: Remove What Doesn't Belong

Walk into a room and remove anything that clearly belongs elsewhere.

Don't decide yet — just remove it.

Place everything temporarily in one holding area so you can see the room clearly.

Step 2: The Top-Five Test

Ask: - What are the five things I absolutely keep in this room? - What are the five easiest things to remove?

Remove the second group immediately.

Space-Specific Guidance

Kitchen

- Clear all countertops
- Donate unused gadgets
- Toss expired food, spices, and duplicates
- Store coffee makers and toasters out of sight

Living & Dining Areas

- Remove excess furniture
- Create clear walkways
- Eliminate paper piles, remotes, magazines
- Convert dining rooms back to dining rooms

Bedrooms

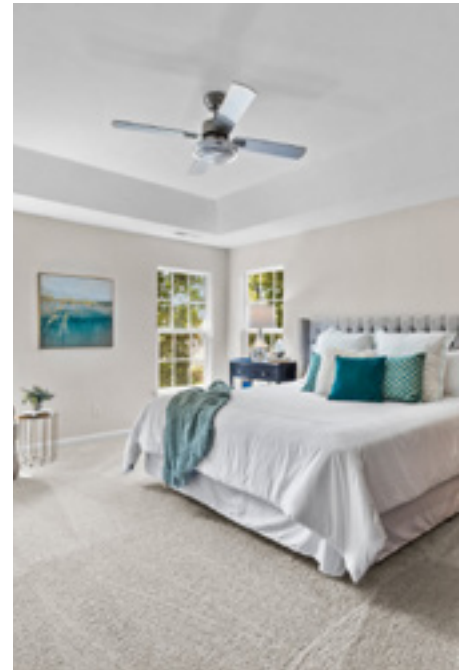
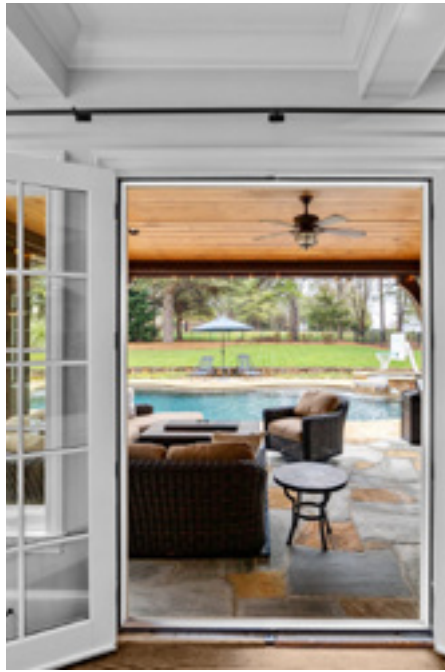
- Neutral bedding, minimal pillows
- Remove personal items
- Clear nightstands
- Closets should be no more than 60-70% full

Children's Rooms

- Remove names from walls
- Pack unused toys
- Keep only what's actively used

Bathrooms

- Clear counters completely
- Use a shower caddy and hide it during showings
- Reduce linen closets - keep extra blankets for moving things
- Remove all medications



Depersonalization Is Non-Negotiable

Your home will be online. Be safe and ensure your privacy.

Remove: - Family photos - Children's names on walls - Awards, politics, religious items

This protects you and helps buyers emotionally move in.

What to Watch For While Decluttering

Ask these questions often:

1. Is it broken?
2. Is it part of a system I no longer own?
3. Do these clothes still fit—and are they in good condition?
4. Have my kids outgrown this?
5. Is it expired (cleaners, paint, makeup, spices)?
6. Do I really need to keep documents beyond retention guidelines?

Also check:

- Book pages
- Clothing pockets

Sentimental Items: Save for Last

Photos, heirlooms, childhood keepsakes — these slow everything down.

Declutter them after the rest of the house is complete, when you're already decisive.

Selling vs. Donating (*Be Ruthless With Your Time*)

Expert rule of thumb: - If it doesn't sell in 48 hours, donate it. - Your time is worth more than haggling over a \$100 item.

Options: - Facebook Marketplace - Buy Nothing groups - Goodwill or Habitat for Humanity - ThredUp / Poshmark for high-end clothing

Once you decide it goes — get it out of the house.

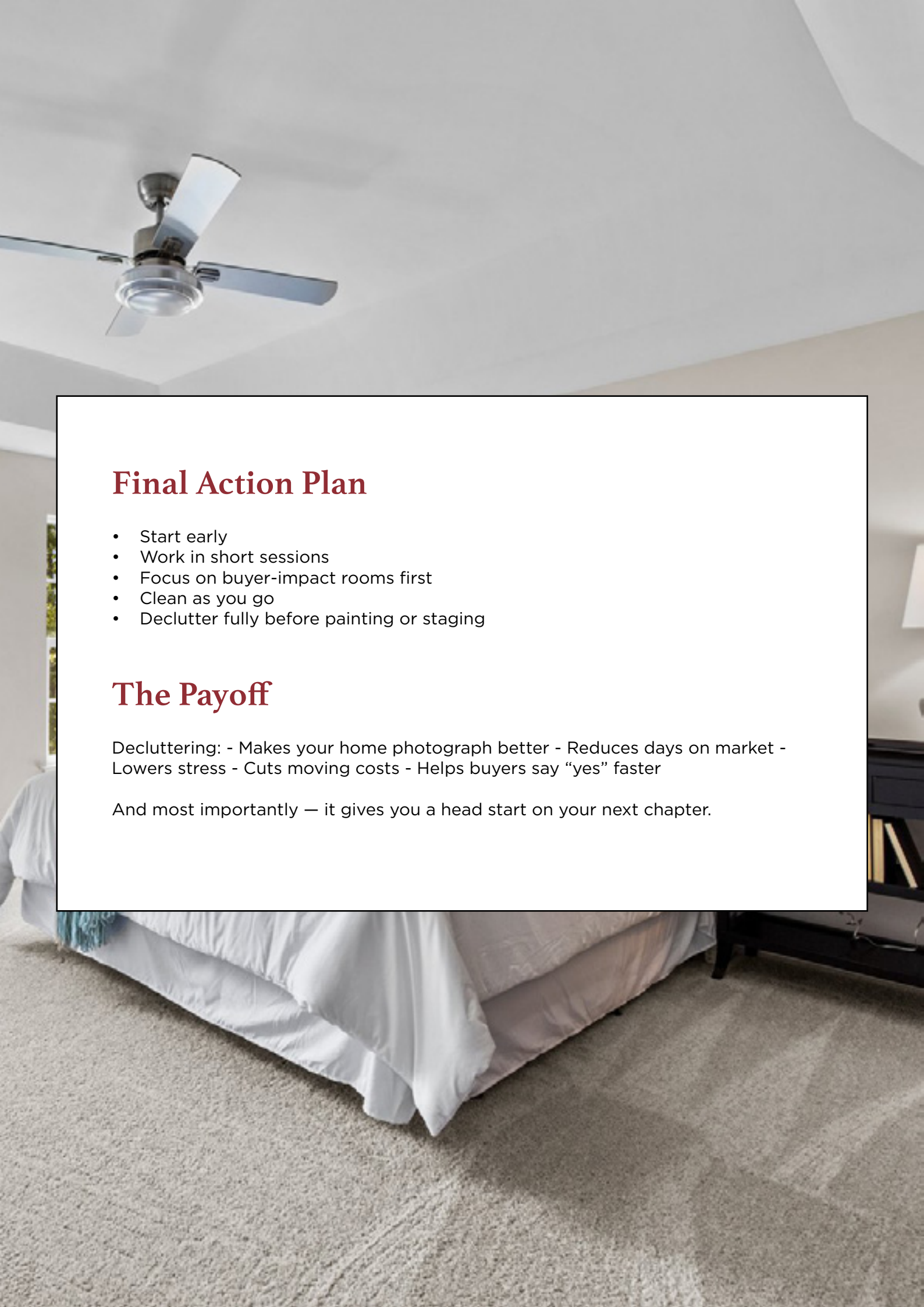
Holiday Décor & Old Tech

If it's faded, damaged, outdated, or hasn't been used in years — let it go. Old cameras, cords, gadgets, and electronics should be recycled locally.

Tools That Make This Easier

- Storage unit for items you're keeping but don't need right now
- Dumpster for broken or bulky items
- Donation pickup scheduled in advance



A photograph of a bedroom interior. In the foreground, a bed is covered with white linens and a blue and white patterned blanket. To the right, a dark wood bookshelf is partially visible. In the background, a ceiling fan with three white blades and a silver base is mounted on the ceiling. The walls are a light beige color.

Final Action Plan

- Start early
- Work in short sessions
- Focus on buyer-impact rooms first
- Clean as you go
- Declutter fully before painting or staging

The Payoff

Decluttering: - Makes your home photograph better - Reduces days on market - Lowers stress - Cuts moving costs - Helps buyers say “yes” faster

And most importantly — it gives you a head start on your next chapter.

Thinking about selling?

Let's create a strategy that protects your equity,
simplifies your process, and gets your home sold with confidence.

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