



"Home Hunter's" Home Staging Guide

Use this handy checklist when staging and preparing your home for potential buyers.

1. Plan Ahead

- Walk through each room and evaluate the home from a buyer's perspective.
- Consider a professional home inspection to discover any repairs needed.
- Hire a contractor to handle any major projects.
- Consider getting an appraisal to find out your current market value.
- Have a yard sale. Sell, donate or trash anything you don't need.

2. Clean, Declutter and Depersonalize

- Thoroughly clean the entire home.
- Scrub tile in the kitchen and bathrooms.
- Clean hardwood floors.

- Steam clean carpets and drapes. Consider replacing carpet if stains are prominent.
- Get rid of all dust bunnies.
- Repair cracks and holes in the walls.
- Paint interior walls with neutral colors, like beige, cream or light pastels. Pale blues and greens are good for bathrooms.
- Remove excess and oversized furniture.
- Rearrange furniture to maximize space.
- Organize room closets and store out-of-season clothes.
- Remove all small appliances, toys, magazines and pet items.
- Remove family photos, personal collections and medications.
- Remove items from the garage and store them off site.
- Secure valuable items, including cash and jewelry.

3. Maximize Curb Appeal

- Paint the home's exterior, including trim, doors and shutters.
- Check the front door, doorbell, address number and welcome mat.
- Power-wash the siding and windows.
- Inspect the roof and make repairs as needed.
- Repair cracks in the driveway and sidewalks.
- Sweep the entryway and walkways.
- Mow, water and fertilize the lawn.
- Trim shrubs and trees and rake the leaves.
- Plant colorful flowers and shrubs.
- Store any toys or equipment lying on the yard.
- Clean up pet droppings.
- Clean the gutters and downspouts.

4. Pay Attention to Kitchens and Bathrooms

- Mop and wax/polish the floors.
- Clear the countertops.
- Replace outdated hardware.
- Clean appliances and fixtures.
- Clean and organize the pantry, cabinets and drawers.
- Replace old caulking around sinks and bathtubs.
- Remove stains from sinks, toilets and bathtubs.
- Keep all toilet seat lids closed.
- Hang fresh towels.

5. Appeal to the Senses

- Bake cookies or burn scented candles.
- Offer light refreshments.

- Install higher wattage incandescent light bulbs to brighten rooms.
- Turn on all the lights.
- Open windows to let in fresh air.
- Open curtains or blinds to let in natural light and show off views.
- Turn off TVs.
- Relocate pets on the day of the open house.
- Refrain from smoking in the home.

6. Show Off Your Home's Best Features

- Remove rugs to show off hardwood floors.
- Pull back drapes to showcase nice views.
- Stage the front porch or deck with furniture and potted plants.
- Make sure fireplaces are in working condition.

- Clean the backyard and pool area.

7. Prepare for the Open House

- Hold an exclusive brokers' open house to let local agents know your home is on the market. Offer food and refreshments.
- Inform family, friends and neighbors of the date and time of your open house.
- Put ads in local newspapers, real estate publications and on free Web sites like Craigslist.com.
- Put up "Open House" signs on the front lawn and at nearby intersections with directions to the house.
- Create property description sheets and prepare important documents, such as homeowner's association rules, inspection reports and purchase offer forms.

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