



# **Preparing Your Home for Professional Real Estate Photography**

# INTRO

Preparing your home for a photoshoot can be exhausting. The day the photographer arrives is one of the most anxious times of the entire home-selling process. Everything must be completely ready by the appointment time. It can indeed be stressful to sell your home.

Your home's marketing will dramatically impact a buyer's opinion of your house and your sales price. It would be best to have the most professional photography and videography possible. This is why real estate marketing has changed so drastically over the past few years.

One of the most important things to know about your professional real estate photographer/videographer is that they are indeed artists. They can make your home look amazing with their skill sets.

When your real estate photographer shows up, they will walk around the house and spend some time searching out the most important aspects to highlight potential buyers. Seasoned professionals have developed a unique ability to identify the home's pros and cons. They know how to showcase the property's best attributes. Their experience and trade tools allow them to manipulate light and space to make your home look as big and bright as possible.

Since your photographer/videographer is an artist, you will get significantly more out of their services if your house is entirely ready when they arrive. Artists can get distracted if they have to rearrange and tidy rooms before a shoot. After all, that's not part of their job description.

You want their attention to be focused on a bright and clean home rather than on the work it takes to get the house to that point. They're often on a tight schedule, and time spent doing your job is time they can't spend doing theirs.

To get the most out of your professional real estate photographer, follow the real estate photography pre-shoot checklist below. It will help ensure your house is photo-ready and welcoming before listing it for sale. Use these tips to prepare your home.

# INTERIOR

## 1. Clear Clean Kitchen Counters and Sink

When the kitchen counters are entirely cleared off, the kitchen looks larger, and buyers can imagine how they might use the space. Coffee makers, mixers, and decorations only distract buyers and often make the kitchen feel cluttered. Remove everything but perhaps a few decorative items from the countertops and clean all surface areas, including the appliances, kitchen sink, and backsplash.

## 2. Clear and Clean Bathroom Sinks, Tubs, and Showers

Place all the shampoo bottles, soaps, shaving razors, and other items into a bin that can fit underneath the bathroom sink. Take everything off the bathroom counter as well. You want the bathrooms to appear vacant. Clean, neatly folded towels on towel racks are fine.

## 3. Replace Burned Out Light Bulbs

This is one of the most overlooked items on the list. **Be sure to check all the ceiling lights, extra lamps, and exterior lights to ensure they all work.** If the home has dark areas, such as a basement, add a few additional lamps to brighten them up. Floor lamps that provide up-lighting are great! The more light, the better!

## 4. Turn On All Lights Throughout the Entire House

Lighting is ~~one of~~ **the most important** aspects of photography. It's essential to have as much light as possible. **Turn on all of the lights in the house, including lamps and exterior lights.** When they arrive, your photographer will be happy to find your home in its brightest light.

## 5. Open All Window Treatments

Natural light from windows brings life and emotion into real estate photos. **We recommend opening all window treatments throughout the house to let in as much light as possible.** If it's too bright outside, your photographer will alter your shades and curtains to balance the shot. Don't forget to clean the windows!

## 6. Remove Unnecessary Furniture and Decorations

This is probably the most challenging request for sellers, but it's one of the most critical items on the list. Removing and storing excess or bulky furniture can be difficult, but **it opens up the floor space and makes the home look much larger.** This is truly one of those situations where "less is more."

## 7. Remove Floor Mats and Runners

Floor mats and runners are great at protecting your floors, but they can make the overall floor space look smaller, making the room look smaller. Roll up and remove all floor mats in the bathrooms, kitchen, and laundry areas.

## 8. Turn Off All Ceiling Fans, TVs, and Computer Screens

Most photographers use HDR photography, which takes multiple light exposures for each photo and combines them into one final shot. **Any moving items like ceiling fans or active TV/Computer screens look strange in HDR.** For this reason, **we recommend turning off anything that moves or causes motion blur.**

## 9. Clear Appliance Surfaces of Magnets and Clutter

It's common to keep magnets, notes, reminders, and other personal information on the refrigerator. We ask our sellers to **remove all magnets, calendars, and personal items from the fridge** and any other place where they place notes. It will make your home appear tidier and **keep your private info safe** from the general public.

## 10. Make All of the Beds

Making the bed is an obvious one that surprisingly gets overlooked often, especially in the secondary bedrooms. Make and decorate all the beds with **matching sheets, blankets, and pillows**. Use bedding that covers the entire bed and fits the mattress correctly. Use decorative pillows to brighten up the bed, if possible. If a room is clean and the bed isn't made right, the whole room can seem "off."

## 11. Remove All Personal Photos and Items

It's hard for buyers to visualize themselves in your house if your personal items are visible. Since you want your buyers to focus on the house and not on you, it is best to remove all private photos and articles from the home, including patios, porches, and garages.

## 12. Put All Shoes and Jackets in Closets

When buyers see shoes and jackets on coat racks and entryway floors, they subconsciously assume that the home lacks storage space. Removing all jackets and shoes from view throughout the house is best. Store away any loose items to remove all distractions.

## 13. Clear All Nightstands and Dressers

Nightstands tend to accumulate items naturally. Half-read books, prescription bottles, tissues, and electronic devices will quickly clutter these areas. **Remove everything but a lamp and one decorative element, such as a small floral arrangement or decorative book**, to make the space look clean and presentable. Think of a freshly cleaned hotel room.

## 14. Remove ALL Pet Items

Not everyone has pets. What's more, some people are severely allergic to animals. **It's imperative to ensure that your house shows no signs of pets, especially pet smells**. Please spend some time getting this part right, as **it is one of the most significant factors in home price reductions and negative feedback from home buyers**. Consider that you would be "nose blind" to the smell, as you live in it daily. Ask a neutral party for their honest opinion before listing.

# EXTERIOR

## 1. Tidy Up the Yard and Landscaping

First impressions are crucial, so **ensure the front yard is cleaned and all landscaping is trimmed back and tidy**. The first picture that people will see of your home will be the outside front yard shot, so it needs to be presented in the very best condition.

## 2. Sweep up the Porch/Patio/Deck

This step is imperative in the fall when leaves accumulate daily. **Ensure the entire front and back porches are swept clean**, and remove any nonessential items. If possible, stage these areas with flowers and decorative items to create a relaxing space that invites homebuyers in.

## 3. Remove All Cars from Road and Driveway

Having cars in the driveway is never good during real estate photos. **Always remove all cars, trucks, RVs, and trailers from the driveway and front of the house**. If you are friends with your neighbors and feel comfortable doing so, you could even ask them to move their cars from the road to make the street look quiet and inviting in your photos.

## 4. Hide All Garbage Cans and Lawn Equipment

Large garbage cans and unsightly lawn equipment can be very distracting in real estate photos. **Put all trash cans in the garage, along with garden hoses, lawnmowers, and other yard maintenance tools**. Keep the lawn free and clear of any small toys and pet items.

## 5. Remove Outdoor Cooker Covers

It's time to show off that awesome BBQ grill, not hide it! Smoker and grill covers should be removed so that cookers are exposed and ready for use. If it's an old grill that needs to be covered because it's rusty and unsightly, it's better to remove or throw it out completely.

# ALSO...

## 1. Be Prepared to Reschedule

Most photographers work around the weather because it has such a substantial impact on the final marketing materials. It's impossible to fly drones and get footage if it's raining or extremely windy. **Be prepared to have your agent call and reschedule your photoshoot if the weather takes a dramatic turn for the worse.** If a professional determines they should wait, trust them that it's for the best.

## 2. Be Prepared to Leave for a Few Hours

At EASTEX Photography, we use 3D imaging technology to scan every part of the home. If you have pets or kids running through the house during a photo shoot, they are likely to be in the 3D tour somewhere, which can pose significant problems. **It's best to plan to leave your home and give the photographer a non-occupied space in which to work.** It also helps them not to get distracted. Even if you're shuffling from room to room to "stay out of the way," it can be distracting. You will get the most out of the process if the home is unoccupied.

## 3. Leave Instructions for the Photographer to Lock Up

When your professional photographer/videographer is finished, they will usually message the Realtor who scheduled the photoshoot to let them know they are done. If you've followed our advice and aren't home, leave a key and instructions to make your photographer aware of your preferred method of locking up.