



# Preparing Your Home for Professional Real Estate Photography

Photography by JR | Nacogdoches, Texas | (936) 234-1778 | [jasonreina.com](http://jasonreina.com)

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# INTERIOR

## **1. Clear Clean Kitchen Counters and Sink**

When the kitchen counters are entirely cleared off, it makes the kitchen look 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 of the shampoo bottles, soaps, shaving razors, and other items into a bin that can fit underneath the bathroom sink. Take everything off of 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 of the ceiling lights along with extra lamps and exterior lights to make sure that they all work. If there are dark areas in the homes, such as a basement, add a few extra 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. Your photographer will be happy to find your home in its brightest light when they arrive.

## **5. Open All Window Treatments**

Natural light from windows brings life and emotion into real estate photos. We recommend opening all of the 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 large bulky furniture can be challenging, but it opens up the floor space and makes the home look much larger. It's wise to consult a professional stager to determine which items should stay or go. 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, which in turn makes the room look smaller. Make sure to roll up and remove all of the floor mats in the bathrooms, kitchen, and laundry areas. If you have any rugs, consult a stager to determine whether or not they should stay.

## **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 very 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 not only make your home appear tidier; it will 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. Be sure to 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, it makes the whole room 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 everywhere. Since you want your buyers to focus on the house and not on you, you'll need to remove all private photos and articles from the entire 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. It's best to remove all jackets and shoes from view throughout the entire house. Store away any loose items to remove all distractions.

## **13. Clear All Night Stands 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. In fact, some people are severely allergic to animals. It's imperative to make sure that your house shows no signs of pets, especially pet smells. 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 every day. Ask a neutral party for their honest opinion before listing.

# EXTERIOR

## **1. Tidy Up the Yard and Landscaping**

First impressions are crucial, so make sure that the front yard is cleaned up, and all of the 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 that 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**

It's never good to have cars in the driveway during real estate photos. Always remove all cars, trucks, RV's, 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 of the 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 as well.

## **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.

## **6. Open Up Patio Umbrellas**

If it's not too windy during your photoshoot, be sure to open up any patio umbrellas to stage the area. Dust off chairs and set up the area as though you are going to enjoy it with friends later. Fresh outdoor pillows and flowers will create an inviting space for your photographer to highlight while in your backyard.

# QUICK TIPS

## 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 he/she should wait, trust them that it's for the best.

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

At Photography by JR, we use 3D imaging technology to scan every part of the home. If you have pets or kids running through the house during a photoshoot, 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 simply 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 that 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.

Source: <https://greatcoloradohomes.com/blog/20-steps-to-prepare-your-home-for-real-estate-photos.html>