

13 Home-Selling Prep Tips

When buyers tour your home, you won't be able to stand in the background with a pair of pom-poms, cheering about how great it is. The home will need to impress buyers all on its own. We've put together a list of things you can do to make your home look its best.

1 Less is more.
Rent storage to help declutter. Remove enough items from your home so that closets and storage spaces are half empty.

2 Make sure your rooms are well lit.
Open the shades, blinds, or curtains to fill each room with natural light.

3 Get a second opinion.
Ask a friend to critique your home.

4 Don't hide any assets.
Remove rugs to highlight nice flooring. Clear off counters to display beautiful materials, like granite or stone.

5 Create traffic flow through the rooms.
Place seating into conversational groups and arrange furniture to help visitors move through your home.

6 Freshen up your home.
Deep-clean and air out rooms by opening windows before showings. Display fresh flowers or a bowl of brightly colored fruit.

7 Update your locks.
If you have various keys for your doors, re-key the locks so that one key works for all of them.

8 Leave instructions for the agent.
If there's anything the showing agent needs to know ("don't lock the front door" or "take off your shoes"), leave clear instructions in an obvious place.



9 Remove all pets.
Keep pets in the backyard or garage, take them for a walk, send them to a friend's house, or send them to the pet hotel to avoid interrupting showings.

10 Make minor repairs.
Fix issues that can distract buyers, such as leaky faucets, burned-out bulbs, loose knobs, broken tiles, squeaky hinges, and worn toilet seats.

11 Clean and make your bed every day.
You never know when a showing might occur.

12 First impressions matter.
Weed and mow the lawn, paint the trim, clean the windows, etc. Remove your car from the driveway and schedule an extra garbage pickup for excess clutter.

13 Remove all personal items.
Put away personal photos, refrigerator art, calendars, valuables, prescription drugs, and toiletries.

Selling Prep Checklist

Refer to this checklist as you prepare to sell your home.

Curb Appeal

- Mow and edge lawn, keep front yard tidy
- Make sure doorbell works
- Remove mildew from sidewalks and siding
- Eliminate stains from driveway
- Add a new welcome mat
- Repair broken windows
- Ensure the house number is easily visible
- Put away holiday decorations
- Keep front light on for evening showings
- Create a clear path to the front door
- Trim shrubs and trees, especially around windows to showcase your view
- Schedule an extra garbage pickup

Dining Room

- Remove table leaves to create more space
- Set table for a semi-formal dinner
- Polish any visible silver or crystal
- Declutter china cabinets and buffets

Bedrooms

- Make the beds daily
- Clean closets and keep only half full
- Put away personal items and photos
- Organize the master bedroom into well-defined areas

Interior

- Repair any holes or marks on walls
- Have adequate lighting for evening showings
- Wash all windows and mirrors
- Organize closets and keep only half full
- Fix doors that don't close properly
- Paint walls a neutral color
- Clean carpets
- Declutter and store non-essential items
- Clean curtains and blinds
- Eliminate any unpleasant odors
- Replace any burned-out bulbs
- Put away holiday decorations

Bathrooms

- Remove mildew from showers
- Keep towels clean and folded
- Declutter sink area and cabinets
- Coordinate color of towels and mats

Living/Family Room

- Clean fireplace
- Set seating in conversational groups
- Limit items on the mantel
- Polish wood furnishings
- Dispose of or store worn rugs

Kitchen

- Declutter and organize drawers
- Keep appliances squeaky clean inside and out
- Remove refrigerator art
- Add fresh flowers or a fruit bowl
- Clean off kitchen counters
- Clean cabinets and store rarely used items

Garage

- Clean oil stains
- Maintain bright lighting throughout
- Sell or donate unused items
- Organize tools and hardware
- Keep your car out of the garage
- Hang or shelf items to clear floor space

Basement

- Neatly stack boxes in one area
- Change furnace air filter
- Dust furnace and water heater
- Ensure bright overhead lighting
- Eliminate cobwebs
- Create easy access to inspection areas, such as the crawl space, furnace, and water heater

