



Ten Home Staging Tips:

1. Keep it clean

Look at your home as though you're seeing it for the first time. Cleaning your home thoroughly is the single biggest thing you can do to help me sell your home – and it has the largest return on investment since all it costs is a little elbow grease! You need to go above and beyond what you would normally consider clean – having everything spotless communicates to a potential buyer that you take care of your home!

Is every room neat, spotlessly clean, dusted and uncluttered? Steam clean carpets and wax floors. Wash walls, heating and A/C vents and light fixtures. Pay special attention to your bathroom and kitchen – make sure that tile grout is mildew free and baseboards are scrubbed. Clean the refrigerator and stove as well as the washer and dryer (inside and out). And, don't forget about the windows! Make sure that all windowpanes, ledges and blinds are spick and span.

It is a lot of work, but it will pay off by dramatically increasing your chance of selling your home faster and for closer to your asking price.

2. De-Clutter

Have a yard sale or take old furniture, clothing and knick-knacks to Goodwill. Organize shelves, put away items and purge your home of unnecessary items. Make sure that your kitchen and bathroom counters are free of small appliances and personal effects.

3. De-personalize

Make your home "anonymous," so that buyers can envision it as their potential home. Put away any family photos, sports trophies, collectibles, knick-knacks, and souvenirs. This will also help to remove clutter and create more space.

4. Freshen-up

You may want to consider a fresh coat of paint and/or steam cleaning or laying new carpet. Consult with your Realtor® about how best to budget for these sorts of "sprucing up" jobs immediately prior to selling. When painting or decorating choose neutral colors and make it as consistent as possible throughout the home.

5. Make a Lasting First Impression

Like a first date or job interview, the first impression of your home is the most important. Walking into a home with fingerprinted screen door windows or cluttered entrance ways, can influence the potential homebuyer's decisions. Likewise, strong odors can ruin a sale, so pay close attention to pet, cooking and cigarette odors in your home. Be sure to open windows and let in fresh air as much as possible. Light delicately scented candles or cook something that will smell good (bread, pie, cookies etc) prior to a showing. Fresh flowers, especially in the spring and winter, can help to brighten and energize your home. Also, ensure your home is a comfortable temperature – in the summer leave the air conditioning on if you have it and in the winter if you have a wood stove light a nice fire (be sure to give it time to burn down...) before a showing.

6. Curb appeal

Homebuyers decide whether or not to look inside a house by the appearance of your home's exterior. Paint or wash the outside of your home. Check your gutters and chimney and make necessary repairs. Keep your lawns trimmed and flower beds weeded. Clear the driveway and yard of children's toys and store away unsightly trashcans. Use urns to define walk spaces and ensure that window boxes are full of healthy all-season plants. Purchase flowers/plants in containers so they will look good and you can take them with you when you leave. Replace any broken or dated light fixtures and wash windows and ledges. If you have a garage, make certain that it is neat and clutter-free as well.

7. Create Space

To make your home feel more spacious, it is key to de-clutter and re-organize. Start by removing excess furniture to make rooms feel more open and replacing any items that are not appropriately sized for the room. For example, oversized couches, while comfortable, can make a room seem smaller than it actually is. Clean and organize your closets and remove excess clutter from all areas of your home. Store unnecessary items in an out of the way location or rent a temporary storage unit. Strategically placed mirrors can make a room feel larger and more spacious.

8. Modern Choices

Ensure that the décor of your home is modern and tasteful. Replace outdated furniture, wall coverings and window treatments. Use neutral tones on your walls and floors and add color with removable items such as throw pillows or bedding. Steer away from too many personal touches to create a minimalist and contemporary space.

9. Make your Pets Disappear

“Love me, love my pets,” doesn’t apply when selling your home. Take your pets with you when your house is being shown, or at least keep them outside. Pets under foot will quickly put a damper on an otherwise positive showing. While making sure that your house is odor-free and spotless applies to everyone, pet owners need to take special care. Be sure to empty and hide unsightly kitty litter, lint brush your furniture, and put your furry friend’s toys, dishes and scratching posts away during showings.

10. Beautify your Backyard

Don’t forget about your backyard. A house showing doesn’t always end at the backdoor. Beyond size and layout, potential buyers can also be influenced by the state of your yard. Keep the lawn, hedges and flowerbeds manicured. Try to recreate an entertaining area (even in the winter) by sweeping decks, cleaning and setting up patio furniture and removing torn BBQ covers. Buy exterior storage containers to hide gardening tools, kids’ toys and pool supplies. If you have a pool, ensure that the cover is pulled back, that the water is inviting and the lining algae-free. Lastly, interested buyers may decide to look inside your shed, so make sure that it is organized and clean.

This may seem like an overwhelming array of tasks to get your home ready to sell but if you end up getting an extra \$5-\$10,000 because you did these things it will all be worth it!



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