

Home Staging Checklist

When you get ready to place a home on the market for sale, it becomes a product. And just like any other product on the shelves at your local store, it has features and benefits, and pluses and minuses. And there are many other products to compete with. **To gain an edge in your marketplace, you must be priced right and look better than the competition.**

If anything in your home need to be cleaned, repaired or replaced, it should be done now – before your home goes on the market (unless, of course, you don't want top dollar for it.). This will show that your home has been maintained and is well taken care of.

When you sell your home, you're going to have to move. When you move, you're going to have to pack. Most of the principles of staging just mean you're going to have to pack up some of your things early.

It's a little bit of work, but you're going to have to do it anyway. And it'll be worth it. So let's get started!

Things to Keep in Mind:

- ✓ Buyers, inspectors and appraisers only know what they see, not how it's going to be.
- ✓ You can't sell it if you can't see it.
- ✓ You can't sell it if you can smell it.
- ✓ The way you live in your home and the way we market and sell your house are two different things.
- ✓ If a house is not ready for a photo shoot, then it's not ready for visitors either!

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- In every room, stand in the doorway and look at the room through the eyes of a buyer. What do you see? Be tough on yourself: What can you do without while your home is on the market?

- ❑ Clean all unnecessary objects from furniture throughout the house. Keep decorative objects on the furniture to groups of 1, 3, or 5 items. In general, a sparsely decorated home helps the buyer to mentally 'move in' with their own things.
- ❑ Rearrange or remove some of the furniture in your home, if necessary. Many times, homeowners have too much furniture in a room. When it comes to selling your home, thin out overcrowded rooms to make rooms appear larger.
- ❑ Most carpets need to be either cleaned or replaced. Have them professionally cleaned before putting your home on the market or replaced if ratted or torn.
- ❑ While you're at it, regularly vacuum all carpet and hard wood floors.
- ❑ Clean all windows inside and out, ensuring they are functioning properly. If during the winter months, cleaning the inside of the windows should be sufficient.
- ❑ Check all light fixtures. Are they working properly? Replace all burned out light bulbs. Look for dark hallways and corners and increase the wattage of bulbs in those areas.
- ❑ Make sure there are lamps with adequate bulbs in dark corners and that they turned on for showings.
- ❑ Repair and repaint cracks and holes on all walls and in ceilings.
- ❑ Repair or replace broken light switches and switch plates. Clean any dirty areas around them.
- ❑ Scrub and clean tile and grout throughout your house.
- ❑ Keep all curtains and blinds open during the day to let in all light and views. The extra cost of heating or air conditioning is a necessary cost of selling.
- ❑ Pack up all valuables to protect them. If necessary, take them to a safe deposit box.
- ❑ Take a hard look at those beloved house plants. In most cases, they need to be pruned and/or the number of plants reduced to create more space. If plants don't look healthy and are barely clinging to life, give them or throw them away.
- ❑ Fireplaces need to be cleaned out. Glass doors should be cleaned. Mantels and hearths need to be cleared off except for a very few necessary items.

- Pack up all collectibles (you need to pack them sooner or later anyway). They distract buyers from the desired focal point ... your home.
- Pack up and put away all family photos – especially of children and grandchildren – that are on shelves, pianos, shelves, tables and walls.
- Reduce the number of books on bookshelves. Pack up the books early!
- Reduce the number of wall hung photos and paintings in every room to one large piece on a wall or a small group of three. Make sure they are hung at eye level. Most people hang their pictures too high.
- Be sensitive to odors because buyers are! Also empty the garbage daily to reduce odors.
- Repair items that are broken. In most cases, buyers will ask for them to be repaired anyway, so do it now.
- In general, pack up the little things. Little things create clutter and they need to be packed up anyway, so pack them up now.

INSIDE:

Living Room, Family Room, Den, Sun Room:

- Clear off all coffee tables and end tables. Keep decorative objects on the furniture restricted to groups of 1, 3, or 5 items.
- Remove all ashtrays.
- Move pet food bowls and toys out of sight.

Dining Room:

- Clear off dining table except for one nice centerpiece.
- Remove extra leaves from tables to make the room look bigger.
- Remove extra chairs from table if they crowd the table or fill up corners of the room. Four or six chairs are enough.

Kitchen:

- Clear all unnecessary objects from the kitchen countertops leaving only a very few items you use on a daily basis.
- Clear refrigerators of magnets, pictures, messages, etc.
- Clean tile grout with bleach if needed.
- Repair broken tile or loose corners on Formica counters.
- Clean the stove top and oven. Replace burner pans if they are badly stained. Clean all exhaust fans, filters and hoods.
- Keep the kitchen sink clean and empty on a daily basis.
- Keep all soaps, sponges and cleaning supplies out of sight under the sink.
- Empty the garbage regularly to reduce odors.
- Move cat and dog food dishes so they don't interfere with the buyer's walk around the room.

Bedrooms:

- Make sure the bedroom and closet doors open and close easily. Fix any creaking sounds.
- Make beds daily and replace bedding if needed.
- Invest in a new bedspread if necessary.
- Clear off bedside night stands, tables, dressers, etc. except for a very few necessary items.
- Pick up all clothes off the floor.
- Store extra books, magazines, or miscellaneous items underneath the bed.
- Keep closet doors closed. Arrange items in closet to make it look tidier. If you have a walk-in closet, keep the floor clean and free of laundry and clutter.
- Remove all posters tacked on walls and repair holes in walls.

Bathrooms:

- Clear all items out of shower stalls and tubs except for necessities.
- Clear off and clean all surfaces. Put toiletries in drawers or cabinets and only keep a few necessary items out in baskets or in a tray.
- Leave out a bottle of hand soap or a clean bar of soap, along with a hand towel.
- Coordinate towels in one or two colors. Fold in thirds on towel racks daily. Purchase new towels if you need to.
- Clean tile grout with bleach if needed.
- Clean or replace the shower curtain.
- Repair any cracking or peeling areas and clean any moldy areas. Paint if necessary.
- Many tubs and showers need a fresh new bead of silicone caulking around the edges to make them look neat and clean.
- Take all cloth toilet lid covers off and keep toilet lids closed.
- Hide garbage cans and cleaning supplies out of sight.

All Closets:

- Keep closet doors closed. Arrange items in closet to make it look tidier. Make sure you can open and close the doors freely without anything falling on potential buyers.

Laundry Rooms:

- Put soaps and supplies in cupboards.
- Keep counters and sink clean and empty.
- Make sure that light bulbs are working and have adequate wattage. Replace light bulbs with higher wattage bulbs to create more light if needed. Most laundry rooms are too dark.

OUTSIDE OF YOUR HOME:

The first impression when a buyer drives up to your home is critical. Walk across the street and look at it through a buyer's eyes. Be tough on yourself. What do you see?

Trim and House Paint:

- Take a hard look at the front door and trim. Give special attention to this because this is where buyers will get their first opportunity to make a close inspection of your home. Does the siding need to be power washed? Does the siding and/or trim need repainting or staining? Repainting the doors and trim to help make the house look crisp and in good condition is one of the least expensive things you can do to dress up a home.
- Spray down your siding with a mixture of water and soap to help clean off any residue.
- Check siding and replace any panels that are broken.
- If the exterior of your house is painted, check to see if it needs to be touched up or repainted.

Front Door:

- Stain or paint your front door. Fix any dings or dents.

Decks, Porches and Patios:

- Sweep all walkways and patios, porches or decks.
- Remove all moss and mildew.
- Decks should be pressure-washed and stained or painted if needed.
- Clear patios or decks of small items such as little plants, flower pots, charcoal, barbeques, toys, etc.
- If you have outdoor furniture, create one simple room setting of clean furniture so buyers see how they can use the space.

Roofs:

- Check gutters and roof for dry rot and moss. Make sure they are swept and cleaned. Be sure to clean the gutters on a regular basis.

Fences:

- Repair broken fences and gates and paint if necessary.

Landscaping:

- Look at all plants. Plants are like children ... they grow so fast. Prune bushes and trees. Keep plants from blocking all windows.
- Remove any dead plants, weed all planting areas and put down fresh mulching material.
- Keep your lawn freshly cut, edged, fertilized and watered during the growing season.

Garages and Sheds:

- Sweep out and organize. Keep storage in garage and shed neat and tidy.
- Arrange tools and place into tool chests or containers.

General:

- Go around the perimeter of the house and remove all garbage cans, discarded wood scraps, extra building materials, etc., to the garage or, if applicable, take them to the dump.
- Remove all plastic storage containers, children's toys, and any unnecessary objects.

General Checklist:

- Use scented items to create an inviting smell in your home. Bad odors can deter some buyers.