

Home Staging Checklist

When it comes to selling your home, there's one thing to keep in mind: people don't buy houses, they buy homes. Your goal is to make it easy for potential buyers to picture themselves living in your home. The act of grooming and decorating a house to properly showcase its features and make it more attractive is referred to by industry experts as home staging. Here's a list of house staging tips to help you make the right impression on potential buyers.

Repairs, home improvements and décor

- Walk through your home with a friend and scrutinize every room from a buyer's perspective. Renovate or fix any problems.
- Repair cracks, holes and chipped paint.
- Tighten loose knobs, towel racks, switch plates and outlet covers.
- Fix tight doors and windows, squeaky floorboards and loose stair banisters.
- Repair caulking, clean around tubs and sinks, and fix leaky faucets. Remove water stains.
- Paint walls with light, neutral colours.
- Improve security by adding window locks and motion-sensor lights outside to boost the attractiveness of your property.
- Add blinds and shutters for privacy.

Cleaning, organizing and furnishing

- Wash floors, walls, windows, ceilings, trim and blinds. Steam-clean drapes, shampoo carpets, and wax floors.
- Scrub kitchen and bathroom tiles.
- Make sure all appliances and countertops are cleared and spotless.
- Spray for bugs, if applicable.
- Throw out or give away anything you don't need.
- Tidy up cabinets and closets, and neatly stow away toys, books and knick-knacks. Limit items stored on the floor or overhead in closets.
- Clean and organize the basement, attic, garage and shed.
- Pull up old carpets and remove area rugs if they're covering hardwood floors.
- Pack away some belongings to maximize storage space for buyers. Consider moving some furniture and items into a temporary storage unit while you show your home.
- Remove and avoid displaying personal items.
- Secure valuables or store them in a safety deposit box.
- Remove items you're taking to your future home, like chandeliers and mirrors.

Exterior prep – curb appeal

- Have the lawn, porch or entryway looking perfect. Plant flowers.
- Patch dead lawn areas with sod or seed. Pull out weeds. Rake leaves or shovel snow.
- Cut and trim shrubs, and remove yard debris.
- Paint doors, shutters, fences and siding.
- Replace broken window panes, and fix torn screens.
- Fix damaged roof shingles. Clean gutters and downspouts.
- Wash the driveway and sidewalk. Patch cracks or holes.
- Make sure outside lights and doorbell work, and your house number can be seen from the road.

Last-minute open-house preparation

- Open drapes and blinds. If there are no windows in the room, make sure lighting is adequate.
- Turn on all the lights, even during the day, including outside entrance, closet, basement and attic lights.
- Clean windows and mirrors.
- Create ambiance by setting up for a formal dinner, lighting the fireplace on a cold day, displaying lightly scented candles for aroma, and adding fresh flowers to your décor.
- Turn off the television, stereo and radio (easy-listening music is OK).
- Put pets in a fenced yard, or drop them off with friends.
- Put out refreshments to keep visitors longer.
- Clear any pet or cigarette odours.
- If possible, leave. If you must remain, be courteous and avoid conversation.
- Ask your agent for feedback after the open house, and make some adjustments if needed.