

Make Sure it's Your House they Come Back to for a Second Look

Here's a critical bit of home selling advice: don't even think of putting your house on the market until you've taken a close look at its condition. You usually only have one shot at impressing potential home buyers, so take some time now to prepare the house for showings and you might be rewarded with a faster sale and a higher offer.

Home Prep Basics

Everything from floors to windows must be spotless, including the oven and other major appliances. Skylights should be crystal-clear, too. Do *not* forget to make bathrooms shine!

Kill the offensive odors. They're the first thing buyers notice, and often a permanent turnoff.

Eliminate Clutter:

- Put away small kitchen appliances and other items that are sitting on countertops and tables.
- Remove photographs and other small items from table-tops.
- Organize closets and cabinets.

Outside Tasks

- Clean the drain gutters. Buyers nearly always comment if gutters are full of leaves and it makes them question other maintenance issues.
- Store or organize items that make the yard look messy.
- Make your front entry inviting. Decorate it, paint the door, or buy a new door. It's the first look at your house, so make it a good one.

If the Home Is Vacant

Vacant homes often home buyers with a blast of stale or mildew-laden air, and once buyers smell mildew, they are out the door. During cold months, the interior of a house without heat always feels colder than it is outside. Leaving the heat or air conditioning running while a home is on the market reduces odors and makes the house more inviting.

Keep the lawn and landscaping tidy, even if you have to hire someone to do it.

That's a start, but you're not finished yet. [Take your prep work to the next level](#) if you want to be ready for buyers.

Don't Take it Personally

Okay, you have the basics behind you. The house and lot are spotless and decluttered. Now it's time to enhance the home's features so that you can nab those potential buyers.

Home selling rule #1: Let go of the personal feelings you have about the house--it's not your home now, it's a commodity you intend to market.

Trust your instincts. Try to evaluate the house as if you are seeing it for the first time. If you were a home buyer, what would you think about the house?

- What changes would make immediate improvements?
- What are the house's best features and how can you show them off?

Create a Mood

Is there a mood that you could create? If you're near a coast, how about breezy fabrics and blue-green colors that remind us of the beach? If you're in the mountains, maybe you could go rustic. Study the house and brainstorm with friends or family members to come up with ideas.

Pack It Up

- Pack away even more of your family photos. Buyers should be allowed to imagine their personal possessions in the home, not look at yours.
- Put away your personal collections so that buyers don't get so interested in looking at them that they forget to look at the house.

Make the House More Spacious

- Remove excess furniture to make rooms less cluttered.
- Clean and organize the closets.
- Store boxes in an out of the way location or rent a temporary storage unit so you can *de-clutter every part of the house*.

Expose Desirable Features

- Remove rugs if they hide nice hardwood floors.
- Remove heavy drapes that keep out natural light, especially if there's a great view out the windows.

Add Some Life

Live plants look wonderful with nearly any decor

Freshen it Up

Are the walls in the house dingy? Are the colors dated? Paint them if possible. Clean curtains and other window coverings. Clean dirt from overhead fans.

Make it Comforting

- Bake bread during showings, or place a fresh loaf in a basket on the counter.
- Classical music playing softly in the background is nice, but choose something that enhances the mood you are trying to create. Where I work, in the Blue Ridge Mountains, natives and out of town buyers react positively to Appalachian Folk music playing in the background.

Work on Curb Appeal

Add exterior elements to grab a buyer's attention before they walk in the door.

- Outdoor lighting makes the home inviting in the evenings--when many buyers do drive-bys of properties.
- Buy attractive door hardware if yours isn't appealing.
- Sweep the driveway and pressure wash the house or sidewalks if necessary.
- Enhance landscaping if possible.

Your goal is to make home buyers fall in love with the house as soon as they see it from the street. And that comes with a bonus--a great overall impression is often enough to make a buyer more lenient about *minor* repair issues.

Every house is different, and no one expects you to be a professional home stager--but taking the time to prepare the house to the best of your ability can put extra dollars in your pocket, and in less than average time.

FINAL

Any further questions...email us at help@listme4free.com. We will respond within the same or next business day.