



HOW TO MAKE YOUR HOME MARKET-READY

Practical tips and expert design advice.



Curb Appeal

No matter how good the interior of your home looks, buyers have already judged your home before they walk through the door. It's important to make people feel warm, welcome and safe as they approach the house.

- Spruce up your home's exterior with inexpensive shrubs, bright leafy perennials or a flat of annual flowers. Look for what's on sale.
- Make it welcoming by putting in a small bench or chair, a colorful pot of seasonal flowers or a modern wreath.
- Clean your porch, walkway, and driveway with cement cleaner and some elbow grease.
- Wash your windows (inside and out) and lift your blinds and shades.
- Wash your exterior siding, trim, and doors. If crunched on time or budget, at least wash the porch and entryway area.
- Clean or update entryway light fixture(s) and replace bulb(s) to make lighting feel warm and welcoming.





Inviting Entryway

Your house needs to be "show-ready" at all times – you never know when your buyer is going to walk through the door. It's important to make people feel warm, welcome and safe as they step into the house.

- Make it welcoming by putting in a small bench or chair, a credenza with clean lines, and understated artwork or mirror.
- Add a simple, modern lamp with a barrel shade, and LED low light bulb(s).
- Add a vase of seasonal flowers (one or two colors) and a white candle.
- Remove worn coats, boot trays, and rugs. Mounted coats with hooks are okay, but freshen the trim with a coat of paint, update and secure the hooks. Hang one coat - black or neutral color.
- Remove family frames, photos and kids' artwork.
- Hide baskets you might use for hats, dog leashes, toys, or other clutter.
- Update the hanging light fixture or clean and replace with new bulb(s).

Neutral Decor

One of the most important things to do when selling your house is to de-personalize it. The more personal stuff in your house, the less potential buyers can imagine themselves living there. Start packing a few boxes early. Remove family photos, memorabilia collections, and personal keepsakes. It is also wise to remove "word" art. What has meaning to you, may not resonate with others.

Although the photos and collections depicted below in the images on the left are simple and nicely arranged, those on the left remove personalization and give potential homebuyers clean, simple and fresh ideas.

Monochromatic colors, natural materials, plain vases, and glass pieces offer a neutral and updated look. Stay away from plastic greenery, florals, and dark frames on lighter colored shelving and background colors.



The Kitchen Sells

You're not actually selling your house, you're selling your kitchen – that's how important it is.

The benefits of remodeling your kitchen are endless, and the best part of it is that you'll probably get 85% of your money back. It may be a few thousand dollars to replace countertops where a buyer may knock \$10,000 off the asking price if your kitchen looks dated.

The fastest, most inexpensive kitchen updates include painting and new cabinet hardware. Use a neutral-color paint so you can present buyers with a blank canvas where they can start envisioning their own style.

If you have a little money to spend, buy one fancy stainless steel appliance. Why one? Because when people see one high-end appliance they think all the rest are expensive too and it updates the kitchen.



Maximize Light



Maximize the light in your home. After location, good light is the one thing that every buyer cites that they want in a home. Take down the drapes, clean the windows, change the lampshades and pendant lights, switch out bulbs to LED, and install dimmers. Cut the bushes and branches outside to let in sunshine. Stand back - what can you do to make your house bright and cheery?



Neat Storage

Storage is something every buyer is looking for and can never have enough of. Take half the stuff out of your closets then neatly organize what's left in there. Buyers will snoop, so be sure to keep all your closets and cabinets clean and tidy.

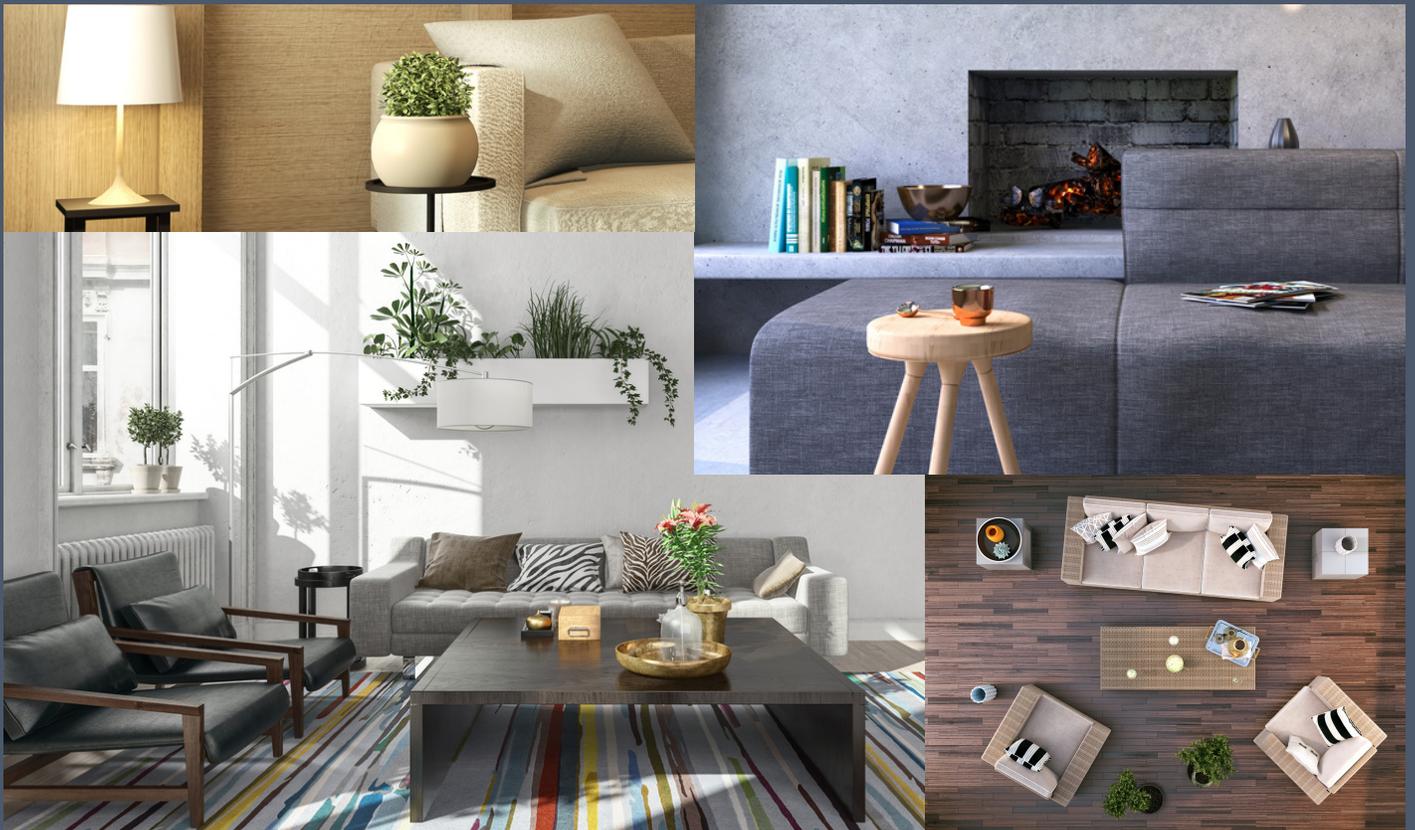
- Pick up neutral fabric or wicker baskets to hide the clutter of belts, scarves, bathroom products, etc.
- Neatly fold sweaters, towels, and blankets.
- Stack or hang items according to color.
- For hangers, use the same kind. Don't mix and match.



Reasonable Updates

Quick fixes before selling always pay off. Mammoth makeovers, not so much. You probably won't get your money back if you do a huge improvement project before you put your house on the market. Instead, do updates that will pay off and get you top dollar.

- Get a new fresh coat of paint on the walls. Stick to white and neutral.
- Rearrange the furniture. Move pieces closer together into conversation groupings and don't be afraid to try different angles to improve flow.
- See what's on sale. Replace outdated lighting fixtures and lamps.
- Find a new, modern floor rug. Add a simple side stool or table.
- Clean the curtains or go buy some inexpensive white or neutral panels.
- Make sure closet doors are on track and function well.
- Fix leaky faucets and clean the floor and shower grout.
- Replace door handles and cabinet hardware.
- Remove the glass and brass fireplace screen.
- Add a modern vase of fresh flowers, succulents, or green plant.
- Baking cookies right before a home showing still works! Try it!



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