

Your home has just one chance to make a great impression with each potential buyer. And it can!

The following “tricks of the trade” will help you keep track of what needs to be done. The whole idea is to present a clean, spacious, clutter-free home—the kind of place you would like to buy. Accomplish a little every day, and before long your home will be ready to make the impression that can make the sale.

THE BEST WAYS TO GIVE YOUR HOME A REAL ADVANTAGE

YOUR HOME'S EXTERIOR CURB APPEAL

- Mow lawn
- Trim shrubs
- Edge gardens and walkways
- Weed and mulch
- Sweep walkways and driveway; remove branches, litter or toys
- Add color and fill bare spots with plantings
- Remove mildew or moss from walls or walks with bleach and water or other cleaner
- Take stains off your driveway with cleanser or kitty litter
- Stack woodpile neatly
- Clean and repair patio and deck areas
- Remove any outdoor furniture which is not in good repair
- Make sure pool or spa sparkles
- Replace old storm doors
- Check for flat-fitting roof shingles
- Repair broken windows and shutters, replace torn screens; make sure frames and seams have caulking
- Hose off exterior wood and trim; replace damaged bricks or wood
- Touch up exterior paint; repair gutters and eaves
- Clean and remove rust from any window air conditioning units
- Paint the front door and mailbox
- Add a new front door mat and consider seasonal door decoration
- Shine brass hardware on front door, outside lighting fixtures, etc.
- Make sure doorbell is in good working order

GENERAL INTERIOR SUGGESTIONS

- Add a fresh coat of interior paint in light, neutral colors
- Shampoo carpeting, replace if necessary
- Clean and wax hardwood floors, refinish if necessary
- Clean and wax kitchen and bathroom floors
- Clean the fireplace
- Clean out and organize closets; add extra space by packing clothes and items you won't need again until you've moved

- Remove extra furniture, worn rugs, and items you don't use; keep papers, toys, etc. picked up—especially on stairways
- Repair problems such as loose door knobs, cracked molding, leaking taps and toilets, squeaky doors, closet or screen doors which are off their tracks. Quiet noisy appliance fans with a squirt of oil.
- Add dishes of potpourri, or a drop of vanilla or bath oil on lightbulbs for scent
- Secure jewelry, cash and other valuables

THE LIVING ROOM

- Make it cozy and inviting. Discard chipped or worn furniture and frayed or worn rugs.

THE DINING ROOM

- Polish any visible silver and crystal
- Set the table for a formal dinner to help viewers imagine entertaining in the room

THE KITCHEN

- Make sure appliances are spotless inside and out (try baking soda for cleaning formica stains)
- Make sure all appliances are in perfect working order
- Clean often forgotten spots on top of refrigerator and under sink
- Wax or sponge floor to a brilliant shine and clean baseboards
- Unclutter all counter space and remove countertop appliances
- Organize items inside cabinets; prepack anything you won't be using before you move

THE BATHROOMS

- Remove all rust and mildew
- Make sure tile, fixtures, shower doors, etc. are immaculate and shining
- Make sure all fixtures are in good repair
- Replace loose caulking or grout
- Make sure lighting is bright but soft

THE MASTER BEDROOM

- Organize furnishings to create a spacious look with well-defined sitting, sleeping, and dressing areas

THE GARAGE

- Sell, give away, or throw out unnecessary items (the perfect garage holds only cars)

- Clean oily cement floors
- Provide strong overhead light
- Tidy storage or work areas

THE BASEMENT

- Sell, give away, or throw out unnecessary items
- Organize and create more floor space by hanging tools and placing items on shelves
- Clean water heater
- Change furnace filter
- Make inspection access easy
- Clean and paint concrete floor and walls
- Provide strong overhead light
- Drain water heater sediment

THE ATTIC

- Tidy up by discarding or pre-packing items
- Make sure energy-saving insulation is apparent
- Make sure air vent is in good working order
- Provide strong overhead light

WHEN IT'S TIME TO SHOW YOUR HOME

- Make sure your property profile folder, utility bills, MLS profile, house location survey, etc. are available
- Open all drapes and shades and turn on all lights
- Pick up toys and other clutter; check to make sure beds are made and clothes are put away
- Give carpets a quick vacuuming
- Add some strategically placed fresh flowers
- Open bathroom windows for fresh air
- Pop a spicy dessert or just a pan of cinnamon in the oven for aroma
- Turn off the television and turn on radio music at a low volume
- Make a fire in fireplace, if appropriate
- Put pets in the backyard or arrange for a friend to keep them
- Make sure pet areas are clean and odor-free
- Make sure all trash is disposed of in neatly-covered bins
- Make sure temperature is comfortably cool in the summer and warm in the winter