

Preparing Your Home

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'd like to buy. Accomplish a little everyday, and before long your home will be ready to make the impression that can make the sale.

Your Home's 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 in 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 area
- 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 solid 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 a seasonal door decoration
- Shine brass hardware on front door, outside lighting fixtures, etc.
- Make sure doorbell is in good working order

General Interior Tips

- 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 wash kitchen and bathroom floors
- Wash all windows, vacuum blinds, wash window sills
- Clean the fireplace
- Clean out and organize closets, add extra space by packing clothes and items you won't need again until after 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, closets or screen doors which are off their tracks
- Add dishes of potpourri, or drop of vanilla or bath oil on light bulbs 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 here

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 brilliant shine, clean baseboards
- Unclutter all counter space, remove countertop appliances
- Organize items inside cabinets, pre-pack 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
- Clean oily cement floor
- 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 and drain sediment
- Change furnace filter
- Make inspection access easy
- Clean and paint concrete floor and walls
- Provide strong overhead light

The Attic

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

When It's Time To Show

- Make sure your property profile folder, utility bills, MLS profile, house location survey, etc. are available
- Open all draperies and shades, turn on all lights
- Pick up toys and other clutter, check to make sure beds are made and clothes are put away
- Give the 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 the radio music at a low volume
- Make a fire in the 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