



PREPPING YOUR HOME FOR PHOTOS

Why it matters

Curb appeal used to be the first impression sellers made to potential buyers. This has shifted in recent years to online viewing. Over 80% of homebuyers begin their search online. Hence the need for professional photographs to show your home at its best. Having your home photo ready will maximize its selling potential. Make your first impression count!

How do you achieve that favorable first impression? Start with a professional photographer! But even before that, you have to prep your home for the photos. While a photographer can make your house shine in photos, you have to make it shine FOR the photos. There are many ways to prep your home, some of which a photographer will do for you, and some they won't. As a photographer, I will:

- Open draperies and blinds for natural lighting.
- Turn on all lights in the rooms.
- Choose angles that show the room at its best.
- Use a wide-angle lens to capture the room in its entirety.

I am a photographer, not a designer. I can not:

- Move or rearrange furniture.
- Remove that 'lived-in' look of personal items.
- Make up beds.
- De-clutter surfaces, rooms or areas, inside or outside.
- Photoshop images to cover up damage or remove items.

So how do you prepare your house for a great photography session before I Arrive? Here's a room-by-room guide:

EXTERIOR

FRONT YARD

This is usually the first photo buyers see, so pay special attention to the front of your house.

- Trim bushes and trees away from house.
- Trim dead branches off trees and bushes.

- Remove weeds and dead plants from gardens. Replace with blooms for the season.
- Close all windows, and open all draperies for a consistent look from the outside.
- Clean siding, gutters, windows, etc.
- Make any repairs to driveway, walkway.
- Clean up leaves and/or snow.
- Close garage door(s).
- Remove cars from driveway and from street in front of home.

BACK YARD

This is often an extension of your living space for entertaining and relaxing. Make it inviting!

- Trim trees and bushes.
- Pick up toys and gardening equipment.
- Plant blooms for the season.
- Replace old cushions with colorful ones that aren't faded.
- Clean out the firepit, grill, pool, etc.
- Make any necessary repairs to fence, deck, patio. Does anything need a coat of fresh paint?
- Turn on water features like fountains.
- Hide trash cans.

INTERIOR

GENERAL TIPS

These apply to every room in your house.

- Clean, clean, clean! This can't be stressed enough. Hire a professional for that deep clean of corners and counters.
- De-clutter everywhere! This means floors, counters, yard, garage, closets, storage, etc. While it's acceptable to have boxes/bins in storage areas, they can still be stacked and organized.
- De-personalize. Remove all family photos and mementoes from walls and shelves. They are a distraction to buyers.
- Remove all evidence of pets – litter boxes, cages, etc.
- Remove unnecessary furniture from rooms.
- Replace all burned-out lightbulbs. Use maximum wattage recommended for the fixture.
- Turn off all electronics such as televisions and laptops.
- Turn off ceiling fans.
- Make all beds and remove anything that's visible from under them.
- Clean carpets and remove small area rugs.
- Freshen up paint if necessary – use neutral tones.
- Remove or repair wallpaper.

INTERIOR

In addition to the general tips, here are some specific to each room.

FRONT HALLWAY

This is your potential buyer's first impression of the interior of your home. Make it memorable.

- Places coats and shoes in closet.
- Hang mirror to make the space larger and reflect natural light.
- Remove personal photos
- Add artificial lighting if necessary.
- If space allows, place a small table somewhere for fresh flowers.

LIVING ROOM/FAMILY ROOM

You probably spend a lot of time in this room, so it's worn in! But it doesn't have to look worn down.

- Keep fireplace cleaned out. Have only 3-5 items on the mantel.
- Cover or replace any upholstered furniture that is worn or stained. Even a casually tossed blanket will suffice to cover the corner of the chair your cat tore.
- Make sure all drawers and cupboards are completely closed.
- Replace faded lampshades.
- Place bright lights in all corners.
- Pick up after children and pets.
- Remove piles of magazines and remote controls.

DINING ROOM

This is a place to sit and eat, not serve as a catch-all.

- Remove all table leaves to maximize space.
- Set the table as if you were entertaining.
- Place a floral arrangement or fruit in the center of table. If you use fresh flowers, make sure the water in the vase is clean and the flowers aren't sagging.
- Remove excess chairs from the room.
- Space remaining chairs evenly around the table.

KITCHEN

This is often the focal point of the house. Make it shine!

- Clear all unnecessary papers and appliances from countertops.
- Remove all magnets from the refrigerator.
- Make sure all cupboards close completely.
- Replace dated hardware and fixtures.
- Keep sink empty.

- Keep garbage hidden.
- Remove pet food containers and bowls.
- Remove extra leaves from table, and chairs from the room.
- Remove high chairs or booster seats.

MASTER BEDROOM

This is the oasis for the homeowner. Make it inviting.

- Clean and press all linens.
- Make the bed with crisp linens and accent pillows.
- Remove personal items from nightstands and dressers.
- Remove storage containers from under the bed if visible.
- Hang up all clothes in closet and tidy shelves.
- Remove excess items from closet.
- Remove excess furniture or exercise equipment from room.

SECONDARY BEDROOMS/GUEST ROOMS

Okay, we get it. They're kids! And their rooms are their own little kingdoms. But not paying attention to detail can possibly turn away potential buyers who don't have children. In addition to the above for the Master Bedroom, here are a few more tips:

- Remove all personalization including names and photos.
- Remove stickers from walls and doors.
- Hide that diaper pail.
- Pare down the toys and stuffed animals.
- Change out linens to something more neutral.

BATHROOMS

Is this only a bathroom, or a potential spa?

- Remove all personal items like toothbrushes and razors from the countertops.
- Hide the step stools.
- Change out towels for a fresh, clean set.
- Replace the shower curtain if necessary, and push it back for photos.
- **CLOSE THE TOILET SEAT!** Nobody wants to see the inside of a toilet in photos.
- Put away the area rugs and bath mats.
- Close closet doors completely. No towels hanging out!

PETS

Those who have pets consider them part of the family, but they're best hidden for photographs.

- Hide all food/water dishes.
- Hide pet beds and toys.
- Keep them out of rooms being photographed, and out of the house for showings.
- Remove all pet hair from furniture.
- Pick up pet waste and toys in the yard.

While you may not be able to afford a complete remodel of your home, the least expensive tasks can make the most impact. Above all, your house should be sparkling clean and completely decluttered.

THE END RESULT

In the end, the photos will tell the story. I can only do so much as the photographer. It's up to you as the homeowner to **have the house ready for when I arrive**. I will always help by making minor adjustments to make the photos look their best, but I cannot be moving furniture, cleaning, etc. for you. If you need help with the design and decluttering phases, I can recommend professionals to assist you.

This is a TEAM EFFORT. My goal is to have these photos show your house at its best. Our common goal is to get you the maximum dollar for your house. I look forward to working with you.