**Preparing Your Home for Sale**



 **Key Takeaways**

* To sell your home as quickly and for as much money as possible, you need to plan carefully and prepare to show it off to buyers.
* Preparing to show your home to buyers requires careful planning to make necessary repairs, clean everything well, and present an organized house.
* Your goal should be to make it easy for buyers to envision themselves living in your home.

## Depersonalize Your House

Pack up your personal photographs, family heirlooms, and other objects and clutter that might distract potential buyers. You want to present buyers with an impersonal, clean environment so they can imagine the home perhaps decorated with their own photographs, furniture, and art objects. The goal is to make it easy for a potential buyer to visualize the house as their future home.

## Declutter Your House

People tend to collect an amazing quantity of items over the years. Reasons for keeping items include an emotional attachment, an intention to reuse or fix the items in the future, or a wish to pass them on to others. However, for many items, if you haven't used them in over a year, you probably don't need them. Discard items in a useful way by donating them to a charity or non-profit organization. For items that are not accepted, call your local junk removal company to inquire whether the items can be picked up.

Remove books and other knickknacks from bookcases, and clean everything off your kitchen counters. Essential items that you use daily can be tucked away in small boxes you can place in a closet when they're not in use. Consider this process an efficient start to your packing.

## Organize Bedroom Closets and Storage Cabinets

Buyers will be curious about storage space and will want to check closets and cabinets. It's important to ensure these are organized, as it sends a negative message if your storage spaces are cluttered with items falling out.

When a buyer sees everything organized down to the last detail, it shows that you take care of your possessions and likely took good care of the house. In kitchen cabinets, alphabetize spice jars, neatly stack dishes, and turn the coffee cup handles so they're facing the same way. In closets, shirts should be buttoned and hung together, and shoes should be lined up neatly.

## Consider Renting a Storage Unit

Almost every home shows better with less furniture. Remove pieces that block or hamper paths and walkways, and put them in storage, along with distracting furniture, artwork, and empty bookcases. Leave just enough furniture to showcase the room's purpose with plenty of room for buyers to move around.

## Remove or Replace Favourite Items

If you plan on taking certain window coverings, built-in appliances, or fixtures with you, remove them prior to showing the house. If the chandelier in the dining room once belonged to your great-grandmother, be sure to take it down before a buyer sees it and asks that it be included with the house.

Telling a buyer they can't have an item that appears with the house and enhances its appeal can hurt the sale.

## Make Minor Repairs

Replace cracked floor or counter tiles, and patch any holes in the walls. Fix leaky faucets and doors that don't close properly, as well as kitchen drawers that jam. Consider painting walls neutral colors, especially if they're currently hot pink or purple. Don't give buyers any reason to remember your home as "the one with the orange bathroom."

Replace burned-out light bulbs, and also consider replacing those that have been in service for a while. Avoid the potential of having a bulb blow out when you flip the light switch during a showing. It's a small incident that can easily be avoided if you are mindful. You want the buyer's experience to be as positive as possible. Throw open the curtains and blinds, and turn on those lights. [Houses show better](https://www.thebalance.com/top-home-showing-tips-1799070) when each room is clean and bright.

## Make the House Sparkle

Preparing your home to be viewed by potential buyers may require hiring a professional cleaning crew. Cleaning may include washing the windows inside and out; renting a pressure washer and spraying down sidewalks and the exterior; recaulking tubs, showers, and sinks; and polishing chrome faucets and mirrors. Make sure all of the dust is removed from under the furniture, in the cabinets and closets, and everywhere else it could be hiding.

Try to maintain this cleanliness by vacuuming daily, waxing floors, dusting furniture, and keeping the bathrooms and kitchen spotless. Hang up fresh guest towels, and keep the toilet lid closed when it's not in use.

Kitchens are a big selling point for many buyers, so make yours as spotless and uncluttered as possible. In the event that someone opens your refrigerator, make sure it appears clean and orderly.

Above all, clean and air out any musty areas. The night before a showing, avoid cooking particularly odorous foods such as fish, garlic, or cabbage. These smells can linger the day after. If you have pets monitor litter boxes or any other areas affected by them.

## Scrutinize Curb Appeal

Make the exterior more appealing and welcoming by painting your front door and, perhaps, adding a wreath of dried wildflowers, or placing one or two flower pots on your front porch. Hire a landscaper to clean up your lawn and add a few shrubs or flowering plants. Consider hiring a contractor to fix any cracks on your front steps or walkway. Make sure visitors can clearly see your house number.

## The Final Step

Back inside your home, linger in the doorway of each room, and imagine how your house will look to a buyer. Examine how the furniture is arranged, and rearrange pieces until the room achieves visual appeal. Make sure window coverings hang evenly. Once you've cleaned and gotten everything repaired and organized, you can begin staging your home.

