

STAGE YOUR HOME

ROOM BY ROOM TO SELL

LIVING ROOM AND FAMILY ROOM

For the duration of your home sale, it's important that you channel your inner minimalist. Remove your family photos, and other personal knickknacks that clutter up the shelves and mantle. If the room is full of furniture, try to get rid of a piece or two — you don't want to give the impression that the room is too small.

Keep the decor scheme simple, too. If you have a boldly decorated room, consider covering the plaid couch with a neutral cover and add pops of color with throw pillows and blankets instead. And of course, be sure that the room is dusted, free of cobwebs, and that the floor is swept or vacuumed.



KITCHEN

This may be the most difficult room, because buyers spend a lot of time looking at kitchens. Make sure every appliance is spotless on the inside and out, including the stove, range and hood, microwave and dishwasher. Polish all stainless steel, and wipe down light fixtures and cabinet hardware. Clean and deodorize your refrigerator, garbage disposal and trash to be sure that the kitchen smells fresh. If you use your kitchen as the "communication center," be sure to get rid of the paperwork and bills that tend to accumulate on countertops.

DINING ROOM

Before a showing, set the dining room table as if you're about to sit down for a family dinner. Go only as far as the place settings, including linen napkins, dishware, water and wine glasses, and some seasonal centerpieces. Buyers love to picture sitting down for a meal after a long day at work. (Hint: If you choose to keep the table set for the whole selling process, and don't use your dining room each day, consider covering the setup with a sheet until the showing to keep dust from accumulating on the table.)

BEDROOMS

Follow the same rules you did for your living room, by removing clutter and family photos so that buyers can easily picture the rooms with their own belongings. Be sure that the closets and any other built-in storage are clean and well-organized. If you can't finish your laundry before the showing, put any dirty clothes into a closed hamper out of the way.



BATHROOMS

Focus first on cleaning your bathroom from top to bottom, including the fixtures, faucets and mirrors. Fix any displaced tile with grout, and caulk the tub or sink if needed. When it comes to the vanity and your bathroom storage, try to create displays in your storage when possible. Color coordinate your towels, and fold them all the same way. Buy small storage containers and label them for "Hair Products," "First Aid," etc. You may not live in a model home, but you can fake it to sell your home faster to eager buyers.



ATTIC AND BASEMENT

As you've removed family photos, collectibles and general clutter from your home, it's normal to put it all into the attic or basement. Unfortunately, it can't stay there. It's really important that buyers see your home as spacious, so your storage cannot be packed to the brim during the selling process. Consider paying for a storage unit during the selling process, and also take time to go through boxes that have been in storage for years, and donate what you can.

PLUS, FOLLOW THESE EASY TIPS IN EVERY ROOM:

- Wipe down the baseboards and corners of each wall
- Check that every light fixture has a working bulb
- Use WD-40 or another degreaser to stop your doors and cabinets from creaking