

Requirements & Prep.

Please be ready for the photos: Please have your home "show ready" before we arrive to shoot your photos.

Discuss with your Realtor how to be "show ready" Scroll down and read and use: 7 Steps to De-Clutter Your Home for Sale.

Please make sure that the light bulbs work in all of the lights and lamps.

Please remove soaps, shampoos, razors, tooth brushes, etc. from the showers, tubs and counter tops.

Please have clean windows. Consider having your carpets, tile, & upholstery professionally cleaned.

Please remove hoses and cleaning devices from the pool, if you have a pool.

Please remove any vehicles, RV's, trailers, boats, campers, etc. from the driveway or in front of your home.

Please remove any exterior flags because they move in the wind and will blur the photos.

Pets: We love pets, but for time and safety please keep them clear of the areas being shot.

Length of the shoot in an average sized home: photos usually take around two hours and about an hour for a Video Tour.

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Requirements For Service Is Subject To Change Without Notice.

Home Preparation: 7 Steps to De-Clutter Your Home for Sale

Your home may be in good condition and well built, yet simple clutter will create a perception of chaos, confusion, and disorder. The purchase decision is an emotional and intellectual response, based on a level of trust in your home. When buyers see clutter, they assume that the home has been neglected, with more to fix than meets the eye. This perception undermines your home's market value.

De-cluttering is an essential part of your preparation, and is virtually cost free. This activity is goes hand in hand with moving. Before you put your home on the market, have a garage sale throw some things out, and box stuff up. Your move will be easier, and you will create an open, spacious, simplified look that buyers love. If you need support, a local home staging service can work with your furniture and create a whole new look. When it comes to selling your home, less is truly more.

1) Front Yard

De-cluttering starts with your front yard. Make sure the yard is mowed and edged, and remove toys, junk piles, empty flower pots, etc.

An evenly cut yard is pleasing to the eye. Fertilize the grass a month or two ahead.

Overgrown, woody shrubs give an old, tired look. Trim or remove them.

Do not allow shrubs to cover windows. They block light on the interior, and give an appearance of crowding on the exterior.

Coil hoses and place any tools inside the garage.

Find a place to store extra cars or boats - other than the front of your house.

De-clutter flower beds. Mulch is inexpensive (about \$2.00 per bag), and does wonders to simplify garden beds, especially in winter when plants are thin. Add flowers on the porch or in beds if weather permits.

Too many flowerpots are distracting - use a few large pots with healthy plants. Never have empty pots or dead plants sitting around.

Dried wreaths may be used on doors in winter, for a simple focal point.

2) Entry

The buyers' first impression is critical, and shapes their attitude throughout the showing.

Invest in a brand new welcome mat.

Stains, scratches and dirty spots create distractions to the eye, and are a form of clutter. Clean, paint, and eliminate as many of these as possible.

Pay close attention to your front door. Is it dirty, darkened by mildew, or in need of re-finishing? Fresh paint or stain will make a huge difference.

Consider having your whole house power washed to remove stains, spider webs and other clutter.

The foyer should be clear of shoes, coats, or excess items on the walls.

Create a single focal point in the entry with an attractive table or painting.

3) Living Areas

Rooms should be sparsely furnished to appear larger and lighter.

The garage or an off-site storage room can be used to hold extra pieces of furniture.

Move large pieces of equipment - drums, telescopes, exercise equipment, etc. - to the garage or off-site.

Do not allow furniture to block windows, doorways, or traffic patterns through rooms.

Do not allow wires to cross traffic patterns.

Choose one or two elements as the main points of interest in a room - wood floors, a view, a table or piece of furniture, a nicely made bed, etc.

Too many personal collections and photographs are distracting for buyers.

Buyers must be able to imagine their own family in the home.

A few decorative items or photographs on tables are fine, but reduce these to just a few nice pieces.

Remove hunting trophies. They can be overwhelming in a small room, and may bother some buyers.

Large plants often take up too much space. Allow only a few healthy plants in the house.

Bookshelves add a warm touch to a room, but be sure that they are not overloaded.

Place books so that the backs are even. Lay some books horizontally, and leave open space for art objects.

Open window blinds and leave on a few lamps for pleasant lighting.

4) Kitchen

The kitchen is the heart of the home and plays an important part in attracting the heart of a buyer.

This is an active area that usually needs special attention. Clean, evenly finished cabinetry is a must. Add new paint or stain, if necessary.

Benjamin Moore Paints has a product called "Howard's Restore-a-finish" that works wonders on scratched or worn cabinets.

New cabinet pulls are an inexpensive item that can help tie the room together in terms of colors and finishes.

Remove purely functional items - such as baking pans, small appliances, vitamins, phone books, plastic bags, etc.

Do not have notes or photos on the refrigerator.

Clear the counters completely, then add back a few decorator items.

Choose decorative pieces that contribute to a warm, elegant, organized look.

Some suggestions: Flowers, fruit, cookbooks, wine, bowls, antiques, new dish towels, small designer appliances, etc.

Often the area under the sink needs organizing and cleaning.

Never leave trash containers out in the kitchen.

5) Bathrooms

It is important to de-clutter bathrooms to give them a touch of elegance or romance.

Keep in mind that you will give up some privacy during the marketing period.

Start by removing everything from the counters.

Remove any toilet brushes or cleaners that are visible.

Put items that you use daily - toothbrushes, soaps, razors - in a container, and place the container inside in a cabinet.

Decorate with fresh soaps, flowers, bowls, photos, or designer bath items.

Invest in new towels and fold them carefully.

Never leave medicines, money, x rated magazines, jewelry, guns, or personal possessions of this type on display.

6) Bedrooms

Bedrooms should appear restful and serene. Sparsely furnished is best.

Use your best covers, or invest in new ones if yours are worn.

Clear off bedside tables, and add back just a few books or nice items.

Bedside lamps add a warm ambience for showings.

Remove excess paintings or photos from the walls.

In some cases, old curtains do more harm than good. Take them down and clean the windows for a fresh look.

Children's bedrooms usually need to be simplified. Take down posters and box up toys. Avoid an overcrowded look.

7) Closets

Organize your pantry with everything facing forward.

Remove excess food and containers.

Relieve your closets if they are stuffed. Pack items that are not needed.

The laundry room often functions as a spill over room with junk on the shelves. Clear everything out, and have just a few soap boxes visible.

Create a Simple Background

Often sellers have organized their homes to express themselves - their travels, collections, interests, favorite colors and unique tastes. However, when selling a home, the goal is just the opposite. It is to create a clean, simple background that many different buyers would like to move into.

Excess items and clutter confuses and distracts buyers during showings. They should not be required to “look past” your possessions. They are there to see if your house fits them, and their emotional level response is a strong factor in their decision. Warm, clean, simple, spacious, well lighted, neutral - and uncluttered - these are the keys to getting the best price for your home.

About the Author: Roselind Hejl is a Realtor in Austin, Texas. Her website - Austin Texas Real Estate - <http://www.weloveaustin.com> - offers homes for sale, market trends, buyer and seller guides. Let Roselind help you

make your move to Austin. Austin Texas Real Estate Guide

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