

How to keep your house looking great for buyers



Light will help sell your home and will make it feel more inviting. (Photo courtesy of Room Solutions Staging)

Date Published: Sep 30 2013
by Maureen Bray of Room Solutions Staging

If you've watched HGTV or consulted with a home stager, you'll have learned some great tips on how to make your home look like a model home that buyers can see themselves living in.

But how do you keep your house looking ready for a showing on short notice? Having a handy checklist can help you remember what to do - follow these tips and your home will be sporting a "sold" sign before you know it!

1. Adjust and maintain lighting - Fully open all of the window coverings to let in the light; Turn on all of the light fixtures and lamps in each room (even during the day). Light will help sell your home and will make it feel more inviting. Replace burned-out light bulbs throughout the house, garage, and all exterior areas.

2. Pets - If you have pets, keep their food and water dishes, beds, and toys out of sight. Remove the cat litter box to the garage or outside for showings. It's best to take pets out of the house and yard during showings since some buyers may be allergic to pets or afraid of them.

3. Kitchen and bathroom - Keep the kitchen and bathrooms sparkling clean every day that your home is on the market. Buyers feel that a really clean home is another sign that the home has been well-maintained. Kitchen trash should be removed daily, and hidden away out of sight.

4. Kitchen counters and appliances - Kitchen counters should only have a few items displayed (a bowl of Granny Smith apples, a plant, a pretty cookbook on a stand, or a bottle or two of wine, for example). It's best to limit small appliances on the counters to one or two, and store any large items out of sight. Keep all large appliances "Q-tip clean" since buyers will likely open them up.

5. Dining room - Dining tables should be [staged](#) with a simple centerpiece, like a fresh plant or flowers. This isn't the time to bring out the good china and crystal, which looks unnatural and too staged.

6. Bedrooms - Make all the beds daily, standing up all the pillows for a hotel look and ensuring that the bedding is fresh and clean.

7. Towels - Keep new, fluffy towels folded on towel bars at all times, and put your wet towels that the family uses daily in the dryer as you leave the house.

8. Bathroom - Make sure that toilet seat lids are always closed when there's an open house or a showing appointment. Remove any fuzzy toilet seat covers, too. Keep bathroom toiletries and cleaning supplies stored out of sight.

9. Home aroma - To keep your home smelling fresh, use a product that's free of chemicals. Air out the house often and don't allow anyone to smoke inside. The best smell in a house is clean so it's best to avoid plug-in air fresheners or any flowery or heavy sprays.

10. Personal security - For safety, remove family photos and any item with a family member's name on it. Put away bills, bank statements, and other mail. Hide jewelry and other valuables, prescription medicines and firearms.

11. Curb appeal - The walkway to the front door should be swept and kept tidy; colorful pots of flowers are a welcoming touch; a new doormat makes a great first impression and sets the expectation that this home is likely well-maintained.



About this Angie's List Expert: *Maureen Bray, named one of Real Estate Staging Association's 2013 Top Ten Home Stagers in the United States, established [Room Solutions Staging](#) in 2006. The company has helped hundreds of Portland, Oregon homeowners stage and prepare their homes for the market and is proud to have received Angie's List Super Service awards in 2010, 2011, and 2012. Follow this #ALExperts contributor on [Google Plus](#)*

What is Angie's List

Angie's List is the trusted site where more than 2 million households go to get ratings and reviews on everything from home repair to health care. Stop guessing when it comes to hiring! [Check Angie's List](#) to find out who does the best work in town.

Answers

[Ask a question](#) on any topic covered by Angie's List and see responses from expert service providers and other homeowners with advice to share.

- [I joined in order to advertise a room I have for rent in my home. I do not see a category for that now that I have paid my dues???](#)
- [Who pays for home staging..Realtor or Seller?](#)

Local Discounts

[Daily deals](#) up to 70% off popular home improvement projects from top-rated contractors on Angie's List!