

Staged MAKEOVERS * LLC



Don't sell your house without US!

Stage to Sell
Stage to Live

Room Staging Checklist



www.stagedmakeovers.com

Dear Homeowner,

Thank you for your interest in Staged Makeovers' Room Staging Checklist. Staging your home to sell is the best way to make your home appeal to as many buyers as possible. The more steps you follow in this checklist, the easier it will be for buyers to envision themselves living in your home. Good luck with your staging and above all, have fun!

For more information about staging or to schedule a consultation, visit us at www.stagedmakeovers.com.

Thank you,

*Sharon Kreighbaum
Owner, Staged Makeovers
Author, "Is Your House Overweight?
Recipes For Low-Fat Rooms"*



Clutter lessens how you enjoy your home because you continually feel as if things are out of place and untidy.

You are selling your home, not your stuff.

When buyers see clutter, they will think the house is small, there's not enough storage space, and it's not well maintained.

Follow the 80/20 rule – we only really use 20% of our belongings. The other 80% just takes up space.

How to Declutter

Focus on one room at a time and finish it before moving on. Start with the most cluttered room.

Designate a laundry basket for items that go elsewhere when decluttering.

Keep a list of where you put everything if you're staging to sell and the location is temporary.

Adopt a purging mindset – be ruthless about what to toss.

Before you can organize a room, you must take everything out and sort through it.

Sort your belongings into 3 piles: keep, toss, sell.

Once a room is cleared out, start by bringing back in and arranging furniture.

Put away medications. They can be stolen at open houses and showings.

Remove all pet items for showings, if possible.

Remove any reminders of housework like cleaning supplies, paper products, toilet brushes, etc.

Large accessories give a room the perception of space as there is less "visual clutter."

Give children a small memory box when they are decluttering. Tell them to put in things that will remind them of living in the old house.



Use lemon oil to dust, vinegar or dish detergent for the floors and surfaces, and baking soda for just about everything else.

Do not smoke inside.

Do not cook with strong-smelling foods.

Clean from the top down, dust from high places, sweep last.

Ceilings – dust chandelier and ceiling fans first, then light fixtures (a room looks much brighter when light fixtures and bulbs are cleaned or replaced).

Windows – wash windows and sills. On outside of windows, clean horizontally, on inside, clean vertically. This makes it easier to spot streaks.

Window treatments – dry clean or launder. Blinds are easy to clean if you take them down and clean in a bathtub. Dry outside.

Walls – use Mr. Clean Magic Erasers or baking soda to remove any marks on walls or trim. If you can't clean walls, consider a fresh coat of paint.

Pictures/mirrors – dust all pictures, shine picture glass and mirrors with window cleaner or vinegar/water.

Woodwork – use Liquid Gold or lemon oil on wood. Clean furniture and touch up with scratch cover and wood color markers.

Fireplace – remove all ashes and clean inside and out. Shine glass fireplace doors. Store fireplace tools.

Floors – sweep and mop floors. Deodorize carpeting with baking soda. Hire a professional carpet cleaner if necessary. Use Capture carpet spot cleaner.

Group cleaning supplies in a bucket and carry them around with you.

Do not confuse repairs with upgrades. Repairs are items you need to fix or replace in order to sell, pass and appraisal or inspection. Example: a leaky roof.

Upgrades are items you fix or replace to make the home more saleable. Example: pink countertops and blue carpeting will not appeal to most buyers.

Do not position your house as a fixer-upper.

Try not to offer repair concessions or decorating allowances up front. In general, people want a problem-free home.

Make repairs and/or replace carpet, paint, etc. using reasonably-priced items and neutral colors. Use the same color carpet and neutral paint throughout the house.

No matter how well the stage is set a home won't sell if it needs serious repairs.

Buyers will estimate repairs high, using pricey labor estimates and the most expensive product.

Don't try to hide or cover up problem areas.

Repairing basics

- Replace any cracked or broken window panes.
- Repair any wood rot (outside door frames).
- Recaulk where needed.
- Make sure windows open easily, and all shades and/or shutters are in working condition.
- Patch all wall and ceiling cracks and nail holes.
- Replace missing or loose floor tiles.
- Glue loose seams in linoleum.
- Clean or replace carpet. If wood floors underneath, refinish if necessary.
- Fill cracks and nail holes in woodwork. Stain or paint to match.
- Tighten loose doorknobs and cabinet pulls.
- Lubricate squeaky hinges (oil or Pam cooking spray).
- Check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detector.
- Always repair a leaky roof and fix any inside damage the leak has done.
- All plumbing must work properly.
- Make sure all appliances are working.



With too many “personal” items buyers may feel uneasy, as if they’re trespassing on your privacy.

It’s hard for buyers to visualize the house as theirs when they see your personal photos everywhere.

Remove political or religious statements.

A few nicely-framed family photos on night stands feel comfortable and home-like but personal photos throughout the house makes buyers feel like intruders.

Each room should have a neutral color scheme, preferably the same color throughout the house.

Neutral does not mean that every wall must be white or beige. The right yellow or taupe works well.

Any strong decorating element, whether or not it is attractive, will cause the buyer to notice the statement rather than the house.

Eliminate room themes – such as the lighthouse room or the retro look.

No one can say “This won’t go with my furnishings” if you have neutral flooring and wall colors.

Most people are not good at visualizing different furnishings in a house; they tend to think “what they see is what they get.”

Neutralizing your house increases the number of potential buyers by appealing to as many different lifestyles as possible.

Remove wallpaper with a rented steamer, then paint a neutral color.

If there is an item you want to keep, such as a chandelier, drapes, etc, remove before you show your house and replace with something neutral.

Create 25 or 35 powerful first impressions. Each room provides the opportunity to make dozens of first impressions.

If you purchase “for show” items (towels, vases, comforter) make sure you like them enough to use in your new home.

Create a vignette around an armchair to show your house as a place where one will have leisure time.

- Drape an afghan over the arm of the chair
- Plump up the cushions; add a small pillow
- Turn on a reading lamp to spotlight the area
- Put an open book on a table next to the chair

Keep wall color, carpet, tile, and countertops neutral. Add color with rugs, flowers, towels, curtains, etc.

Look at pictures in magazines for ideas.

Basic furniture placement guidelines:

- Make sure buyers can walk freely from room to room. If any furniture blocks a path, move it.
- Match size of furniture with size of space. A large table in a small corner will make a room feel crowded. Likewise a small chest of drawers against a huge wall will seem lost.
- Place heavy, oversized furniture across the room from other large, heavy furniture for a well-balanced feel.
- Bring furniture into the room rather than placing it against the walls.
- Angle furniture in a small room.
- Avoid competing focal points such as a large entertainment center on a fireplace wall.
- Experiment with moving furniture between rooms.
- Use area rugs to define specific areas. Do not float them in the middle of the room.
- Create sight lines in a room by arranging furniture to flow from low to high. For example, eye moves from low end table to chair, to bookcase.

Accessorize with items that convey luxury and abundance.

In a cupboard, “face” items just like in a grocery store.

1. Outside

Buyers will form an opinion about your house in the first 15 seconds. “Wow” them immediately.

Just by looking at your house, people will decide if it’s a fixer-upper or a meticulously-clean property.

Curb appeal is all about making it difficult for drive-bys to cross your home off their list.

Buyers linger at your front door and will be looking around as they wait for the realtor to open the door.

Go across the street and look at your property from a distance. Pretend you’re the buyer.

Drive around the neighborhood. Decide which homes you like and why; which homes you don’t like and why.

Usually one weekend can get a home in curb appeal form.

Buyers expect a roof in good condition.

Yards/Sidewalks/Driveway



Dedutter

- Remove toys, bikes, balls, etc. in the front yard
- Trim trees and bushes in front of house.
- Remove or hide a woodpile.
- Remove extra items from yard (tools, garden equipment, lumber, auto parts).
- Coil hoses neatly.
- Clear street in front of your house of debris.
- Weed garden and shrub areas. Remove fallen sticks and leaves.
- Remove and replace dead or dying shrubs.



Clean

- Keep lawn mowed. (Mow grass on the diagonal to make lawn look longer and wider).
- Trim around lamp posts and fire hydrants.
- Fertilize lawn.
- Have septic and wells checked by a professional.
- Sweep sidewalk and walkways. Powerwash or hose clean. Remove weeds between the cracks.
- Clean and sweep paved driveways. Clean oil stains from concrete driveways.

- If car must be left in driveway, keep it clean.
- Clear drainage grates.
- In winter, shovel snow and use sand or salt on ice patches.
- Clean up pet debris.



Repair

- Till spots where grass won’t grow and plant a flower bed.
- Rake, weed, and mulch planting areas.
- Remove dead plants.
- Cut out brown spots or bare spots from lawn and replace with sod.
- Repair or paint steps leading to front door.
- Repair cracks in walkways and driveway. Add new load of gravel to gravel driveways.



Neutralize

- Remove personal items, statues, etc.
- Remove visually-distracting lawn ornaments.



Make it Fabulous!

- Edge your property.
- Add splashes of color and beauty with potted flowers. (You can take potted plants with you).
- Place potted plants at front door and annuals along walk or in clusters around lamppost or tree. (In colder climates, use small evergreen in a pot).
- Place hanging flowering plant at eye level on front entry, porch, or patio.
- Plant window boxes with greens and flowers.

1. Outside

House/Front door/Porch/Patio



Declutter

- Have an inviting and clear path to your front door.
- Reduce clutter on decks, porches, and patios.
- Hide trash cans.
- Check around the entire house. Serious buyers will walk all the way around the outside of the house.



Clean

- Repaint or clean front door and trim.
- Polish, paint, or replace door hardware.
- Clean door transom or side windows.
- Clean or replace outdoor light fixtures.
- Clean cobwebs from porch.
- Sweep decks, walks, porches, and patios. Powerwash, stain, or paint if necessary.
- Remove moss from decks, walks, and patios.
- Clean debris and moss from roof and gutters.
- Hose down eaves.
- Powerwash siding. (Do not use power washer on peeling paint.)
- Wash inside and outside of windows.
- Wipe down lawn furniture, grills, and pool or spa equipment.
- Hose down screens in gazebos or porches.
- Wipe down railings on balconies.



Repair

- Make sure you have nice, easy-to-see house numbers.
- Mailbox should be up-to-date and spotless with house numbers that are visible from the street.
- Repair foundation cracks.
- Replace or repair roof if necessary.
- Repair or replace gutters and downspouts.
- Make sure basketball hoop is in good condition.
- Repair and paint fences. Gates should work easily and noiselessly.
- Windows:
 - Replace cracked or broken glass.
 - Repair wood rot.
 - Recaulk where needed.
 - Repair or replace screens if necessary.

- Touch up with paint.
- Doors:
 - Tighten doorknobs.
 - Oil squeaky hinges (or use Pam cooking spray).
 - Replace rollers in sliding doors if necessary.
 - Ensure that doorbells work.
- Decks/Porches
 - Nail down loose boards on deck.
 - Repair screens.
 - Repair or replace broken tiles in pool or spa.
 - Make sure pool and spa equipment works properly.
 - Tighten railings. Touch up chipped or rusted areas with paint or stain.



Neutralize

- Good colors for front door are red, black, or dark taupe (consider siding and shutter colors).
- Paint outside of your home if it needs it. Paint house a soft neutral (sometimes just painting the trim makes a big difference.)



Make it Fabulous!

- Consider painting the inside ceiling of your porch.
- Keep outside lights on when house is on the market.
- Clean, paint, or shine (ArmorAll) shutters.
- Consider adding window box painted the same color as the shutters.
- Add stylish door knocker to the front door.
- Add all-season wreath.
- Add planters or large topiary trees by entrance.
- Add new house numbers.
- Purchase new doormat.
- Arrange lawn furniture on deck or patio to suggest an outdoor barbeque.
- Place table next to the barbeque with barbeque tools.
- Place a pitcher of lemonade and glasses on patio table.
- Place colorful pots of annuals on deck or patio.
- Add pot of flowers to patio table.

2. Foyer

The first view the buyers have of your home when they walk in the door is very important.

Good foyer items are a narrow table, a lamp, a bench or chair, and a vase of fresh flowers.

If there is no formal foyer, and the front door opens directly into the living room, place a table and light by the door and hang a piece of beautiful artwork or mirror.



- Keep area open and floors clean.
- Clear hall table – greenery or flowers and lamp.
- Remove stacks of mail, shoes, hats, book bags, or coat tree full of coats. Put mail elsewhere in decorative box or basket.
- Keep only seasonal items in closet. Remove empty hangers, shelf, and floor items.



- Clean windows.
- Paint or clean walls and ceilings.
- Clean floors, woodwork, doorknobs, and light fixtures.



- Repair windows.
- Tighten doorknobs and fix squeaky hinges on doors (oil or Pam cooking spray).
- Secure thresholds. Replace rotted or cracked wood.
- Replace and match broken switch plates and outlet covers.



- Remove dated wallpaper. Paint a neutral color.
- Replace light bulbs.



- Think fancy hotel lobby – simple elegance.
- Do not use a doormat in your foyer; use an attractive area rug with non-slip pad underneath.
- Don't cover beautiful hardwood floors with a large rug.

- Showcase a unique piece of furniture or artwork.
- Group a small table and colorful vase.
- Add a fresh flower bouquet.
- Change or clean lighting fixture.

3. Kitchen

A sparse, clean kitchen is your goal.

When a real estate agent calls to say they are on their way, the best use of the next 10 minutes is to clean the kitchen.

There should be nothing in your kitchen that doesn't have something to do with cooking, eating, or socializing over a meal.



Declutter

- Put appliances away. Leave out only what you use every day.
- Pack up collections.
- Remove liquor bottles – replace with a bowl of fruit (all the same kind, not mixed).
- Discard what you don't want to move.
- Keep kitchen sink clean and empty.
- Keep soaps, paper towels, scouring pads, and cleaning supplies under the sink.
- Clear everything off window ledge above kitchen sink.
- Remove everything from floor including small area rugs. Move large wastebasket to garage.
- Remove extra table leaves and chairs to make room appear larger.
- Take down hanging pot racks if it will make kitchen appear larger.
- Move cat and dog dishes for showings.
- Remove plants.

Cupboards/Drawers:

- Edit and organize cabinets, drawers, and pantry. Remove items, consolidate, clean, or paint interior. Group like items together. Purchase organizers.
- Purchase new silverware divider if stained or worn. Sort drawer so all similar utensils are together.
- Sort cooking utensil drawer. Remove duplicates and what you don't use. Add dividers and organizers.
- Purchase drawer organizers or use small food containers for junk drawers.

Refrigerator:

- Remove extra items. Face remaining items.
- Remove magnets, photos, and artwork from front, sides, and top of fridge. Kitchen will seem larger and cleaner.

Under the sink:

- Add door organizer, get items off the floor.
- Discard dirty rags/sponges and any extra items.
- Put cleaning products in a basket or plastic tub.



Clean

- Clean walls and windows.
- Use lemon oil to wipe down surfaces for a shine.
- Clean tile grout with bleach if stained.
- Sweep and mop floor. Remove old wax if floors are yellowed.
- Empty garbage regularly. Clean wastebasket or purchase new one.
- Clean windows.
- Launder or remove window treatments.
- Wipe off or replace light bulbs.
- Wipe lighting fixtures with lemon oil cloth.

Cupboards/Drawers:

- Take everything out of cupboard/drawer.
- Wipe inside and out with lemon oil cloth.
- Use Old English scratch cover on wood cabinets.
- Stack products neatly on shelves, face products like in stores.

Refrigerator:

- Clean inside and outside of fridge. Put baking soda in fridge and freezer.
- Remove glass shelves, clean at room temperature. Glass shelves will shatter if cleaned with warm/hot water when still cold to the touch.
- Wipe top of fridge.

Stove/Oven:

- Clean stovetop and oven. Replace old burner pans. Clean exhaust fans, filters, and hoods.
- Shine oven door with vinegar or glass cleaner.
- Replace oven light bulb if necessary.

Sinks:

- Polish and clean.
- Remove stains and mineral buildup around faucets.
- Clean or recaulk tile grout.
- Run a cut lemon section through garbage disposal.
- Scrub bottom of cabinet under sink. Add linoleum remnant if needed.

3. Kitchen

Repair

- Repair countertops and edges that have been damaged.
- If you can only afford to replace one thing in your home, consider replacing the countertops.
- Repair leaky kitchen faucet.
- If floor is in bad shape, use peel-and-stick tiles or add other neutral flooring.
- Have hardwood floors sanded and refinished if necessary.
- Tighten loose knobs and replace broken hardware on cabinets and drawers.
- Check lights and timers on appliances.
- Repair windows.
- Make sure shades, blinds, and/or shutters work properly.
- Patch and repair walls and ceilings.
- Fix or replace light fixture if dull or dated. Repaint for a new look.
- Replace and match broken switch plates and outlet covers.

Neutralize

- Appliances should have matching finishes.
- Replace worn or dated flooring. Light-colored neutral tones are best.
- Remove wallpaper and paint walls a neutral color.
- Light fixtures should be replaced with a current style.
- Eliminate odors from cooking oil, gas, or strong spices.
- If wood cabinets are dated or worn, a coat of white or bone white paint can transform them.

Make it Fabulous!

- Place centerpiece of fresh flowers or one type of fruit in bowl on table.
- Add molding to plain cabinets.
- Install new cabinet and drawer hardware.
- Set a cookbook open on a stand on the counter. Place a flowering plant next to it.
- Purchase new dish towels. Roll them in a flowerpot or a wicker basket next to the sink.
- Add a new area rug.

4. Living/Family Room

Look at catalogs like Pottery Barn, Restoration Hardware, and Pier 1 for decorating ideas.



Declutter

- Remove extra furniture, pillows, and throws.
- Clear items under couch and chairs.
- Clear coffee tables and end tables. A lamp and one book or decorative item is best.
- Remove ashtrays. Do not smoke inside.
- Pack personal photos.
- Remove dried flowers and wreaths and replace with fresh flowers.
- Show off fireplace. Look in magazines for ideas on what to showcase on mantel.
- Open window treatments or remove to let light in.
- Remove items from floor (magazine racks, books, small plants, etc).
- Consider putting large TV in the basement.
- Bookcases should only be 50-60% full.
- Remove paperback books and pack or donate.
- Rearrange furniture for openness. Store, donate, or sell extras.
- Remove unhealthy plants. Take down hanging plants.



Clean

- Clean windows.
- Launder or replace window treatments.
- Use lemon oil to dust furniture and woodwork.
- Clean and deodorize carpet and rugs.
- Clean and polish lighting fixtures.
- Clean inside and outside of fireplace. Pack or store fireplace tools.
- Spray-paint old, rusty, or dated brass fireplace enclosures matte black with heat resistant spray paint.
- If fireplace stains can't be removed, consider painting with semi-gloss white brick paint.



Repair

- New flooring is a good investment for a family room.
- Repair windows.
- Patch and repair walls and ceilings.
- Replace and match broken switch plates and outlet covers.



Neutralize

- If sofa is worn, use slipcovers or replace.
- Lampshades should be white or off-white.
- Paint walls and ceilings a neutral color.
- Remove distracting photos or art.



Make it Fabulous!

- Use at least 3 lamps plus overhead lighting.
- Showcase wood-burning fireplace with white birch logs.
- Place large artwork or mirror above fireplace.
- Set game board or puzzle neatly on a table and add bowl of popcorn or M&M's.
- Stage a quiet place with afghan draped over easy chair, open book on ottoman or end table, and lighted lamp next to chair.
- Display a few visually-interesting magazines on coffee table.
- Stage bookcase by placing some books vertically, some horizontally, and face a few with interesting jackets. Add art objects with accessories.
- Arrange artwork and furniture to highlight special features.
- Add fresh bouquet of flowers on side table. Do not overdo accessories.
- Keep doors of entertainment center closed.

5. Dining Room

Dining room must look like a dining room, not a play room, workout room, or hobby area.

Dining room table should be in the center of the room, directly under the chandelier.

Only furniture in dining room should be:

- A dining table and chairs
- A chandelier or light fixture
- China cabinet or sideboard

The chandelier should be centered over the table and 34"-36" above the table top.

If you don't have a dining room:

- You must have a dedicated eating area somewhere in your home.

If you have no table:

- Use a pair of sawhorses and a door with a tablecloth over it.
- Use a plastic outdoor table with a tablecloth or white sheet to the floor.
- Use short plant stands under a piece of wood.
- Any rectangular shape will work if you cover it.



Declutter

- Clear off table except for one nice centerpiece.
- Remove tablecloth.
- Remove extra leaves from table to make room look bigger.
- Remove extra dining room chairs if they crowd the table. Four or six is plenty.
- Omit salt and pepper shakers, napkin holder, and other extras (store in cabinets).
- Edit contents of china cabinet. Feature one place setting per cabinet window opening.
- Do not put items in center of china cabinet, if the doors will split them in two. Place items on one side then the other so all items will be seen.
- On each section of shelf highlight only one large object, like a vase or bowl.
- Remove greenery and other items from top of cabinets to make ceilings appear higher.
- Pack collections so they don't get broken.
- Remove liquor.



Clean

- Clean windows.
- Launder or replace window treatments.
- Polish furniture, woodwork, and wood floors.
- Clean and deodorize carpet and rugs.
- Clean and polish lighting fixtures.



Repair

- Purchase a new chandelier if yours is dated.
- Make sure light bulbs work in chandelier. Replacing bulbs will make chandelier seem brighter.
- Do not show your home with a chandelier you plan to take with you. Replace now.
- Repair windows.
- Patch and repair walls and ceilings.
- Repair squeaky floors, replace carpeting if needed.
- Replace and match broken switch plates and outlet covers.



Neutralize

- Landscape artwork or decorative mirror work best to adorn walls.
- Dark tones of taupe or brown are good paint choices. Red stimulates the appetite, encourages conversation and is also a popular color for this room.



Make it Fabulous!

- Spend money on a bouquet of fresh flowers before an open house. Make sure bouquet is not so large it blocks the view of the room.
- Don't set the table for a meal. Buyers know you are not going to have a dinner party as soon as they leave.
- Consider putting a rug under the table if there are hardwood floors.
- For rug size, pull out chairs as if you were going to eat, measure from side to side, then add one foot to both length to width.
- Add accessories to dining buffet and group in threes.

6. Master Bedroom

The focal point of any bedroom should be the bed.

Create a fancy, luxurious hotel spa look with all white sheets and bedcover, adding a blanket folded at the bottom.

Flank the bed with nightstands. Do not aim the footboard toward the door.



Dedutter

- Make the bed every day.
- Remove extra furniture, TV and exercise equipment.
- If king-size bed is too big for room, replace with smaller bed from another room.
- If you must store items under beds, use under-bed storage containers.
- Clear off bedside tables and chests of drawers.
- Store valuables and jewelry boxes.
- Reduce number of personal photos.
- If you remove an extra dresser, take it to the basement for extra storage.



Clean

- Wash bedding for a clean smell. Hang outside to dry (if allowed).
- Launder comforters/bedspreads or buy new.
- Clean windows.
- Launder or replace window treatments.
- Wash wood floors/clean carpets.
- Clean woodwork and doors.
- Clean light fixtures/lamps.



Repair

- Make sure doors open and close easily and ceiling fan does not squeak or wobble.
- Repair windows.
- Patch and repair walls and ceilings.
- Replace and match broken switch plates and outlet covers.



Neutralize

- Bedcovers should be a solid color. Try flipping a patterned bedcover over or using white sheets only.
- Do not use animal-themed bedding, country quilt, or bedding with a strong motif.
- Use art that is romantic but not risqué.
- Open curtains all the way to allow for maximum light and view.
- Good paint colors – cream, soft yellow, light taupe and muted sage green. Choose neutral, restful colors.
- Remove wallpaper or paneling.
- Remove plastic weather covering on windows.



Make it Fabulous!

- Invest in new, white comforter with white pillow covers.
- Make sure bed skirt goes all the way to the floor.
- Add vase of fresh flowers on the dresser or night stand.
- Make room brighter by purchasing white lampshades.
- If you don't have 2 matching lamps for each side of the bed, purchase 2 matching lampshades and put a book or two under the shorter lamp.
- Show off size of bedrooms by making sure you can see all 4 corners.
- Place novel on the bedside table. Add a small vase of flowers, a photograph or an attractive reading lamp.
- Hang mirror to create a feeling of spaciousness.
- White window treatments and/or shades are best.

7. Bedrooms



Declutter

- Make beds every day.
- Put computer in office area.
- Move fridge or TV out of room.
- Make closets look roomy by donating extras.
- Return room to bedroom status if room has become a sewing, hobby, or storage room.
- Sort through children's play areas. Box extra toys and recycle or sell old ones.
- Get children involved.
- Pack or donate stuffed animals, most toys, and lots of clothes.
- Consider removing extra bed if not used.
- Remove posters, trophies, and extra items.
- Remove personalized name accents.



Clean

- Wash bedding for a clean smell. Hang outside to dry (if allowed).
- Launder comforters/bedspreads or buy new.
- Clean windows.
- Launder or replace window treatments.
- Wash wood floors or clean carpets.
- Clean woodwork and doors.
- Clean light fixtures and lamps.



Repair

- Make sure doors open and close easily and ceiling fan does not squeak or wobble.
- Repair windows.
- Patch and repair walls and ceilings.
- Replace and match broken switch plates and outlet covers.



Neutralize

- Paint a neutral color.
- Bedroom should be as gender neutral as possible and it should be difficult to tell the age of a room's occupant.
- Remove character items like a themed bedspread.



Make it Fabulous!

- Focal point of any bedroom should be the bed.
- Purchase new bedspread or flip existing one if a solid, neutral color is on opposite side.
- Put throw at end of bed.
- Open a book on bed or set up a tray with cup and saucer and a rose in a vase.
- If there is no bed, borrow or use a camping cot, covered with a comforter or white sheets.
- Set a toy or puzzle on the table in a child's room. Keep other toys out of sight.

8. Bathrooms

Bathrooms are the least expensive to stage.



Declutter

- Clear off counters. Reduce toiletries to a decorative few and place in tray or basket to store out of sight.
- Put cosmetics and grooming items in a basket and place under the cabinet.
- Clean out vanities, medicine cabinets, and linen closets. Remove extras, consolidate rest, clean or paint interior if needed, replace, and face items.
- Hide evidence of primping and hygiene.
- Clear everything from shower and tub and store out of sight for showings.
- Remove bathtub toys. Keep toys in plastic basket and put basket under sink once the toys dry.
- Remove cloth toilet lid covers.
- Keep toilet lids down every day.
- Remove decorations on top of toilet tank.
- Store toilet plungers and/or toilet scrubbers.
- Remove toddler training seats or elderly person's elevated toilet chair.
- Remove small scatter rugs and replace with one larger decorative rug or none at all.
- Hide cleaning supplies and garbage can.



Clean

- Do not leave clothes or towels on floor. A buyer could request a showing at a moment's notice.
- Use lemon oil cloth to dust. Group cleaning supplies in a bucket.
- Clean and fix bath fixtures. Remove mineral buildup around faucets. Polish chrome.
- Clean pipes under the sink.
- Remove rust stains and mildew from sink, toilet, tub, and shower.
- Clean grout thoroughly. Use grout whitener or recaulk if necessary. Use Clorox bleach pen in tight spaces.
- Clean and shine shower doors.
- Clean toilet bowl with baking soda. Keep the lid down.
- Keep floors up-to-date and clean.
- Clean windows and mirrors.
- Wipe down walls and ceilings to remove water spots.
- Clean woodwork and doors.



Repair

- Replace mirror if cracked or aged. Use a framed mirror.
- Replace or paint dated or worn light fixture.
- Repair cracking or peeling areas around shower tile or tub.
- Consider recoating or replacing a dated or stained bathtub.
- Replace cracked or missing tiles.
- Ensure fan works correctly.
- Replace toilet lid and seat if necessary.
- Repair or replace old toilets and plumbing.
- Fix leaky faucets.
- Replace and match broken switch plates and outlet covers.



Neutralize

- If bathroom counters and/or fixtures are a dated color and you can't afford to replace:
 - Do not accessorize with the same color you are trying to de-emphasize.
 - Example: if toilet and counters are pink, do not use pink shower curtain and rugs. Use a neutral beige or brown.
 - If fixtures are blue, use white accents. Add a white shower curtain and white towels.
 - Keep color in bathroom to a combination of one neutral and one color.
- Remove wallpaper and borders and paint a neutral color.
- Paint treatments such as sponge painting can be distracting in a small room.
- Use a white shower curtain and towels in all bathrooms for spa look.
- Do not have themed bathrooms.



Make it Fabulous!

- Replace bar soap with decorative bottle of liquid soap.
- Purchase 1-3 small, white pillar candles.
- Purchase new white shower curtain and liner.
- Always close shower curtain.
- Purchase new luxurious towels (white towels from a discount store are fine).
- Fold towels in thirds to hide seams. Hang neatly on towel rack every day.
- Roll remaining towels and put in floor basket or on the vanity.
- Place a small vase of fresh flowers on vanity.

9. Closets

Remove visual suggestion that closets are cluttered. Do not give the impression that there is not enough storage.

Nothing is off-limits when you are selling a home – buyers have the right to look behind closed doors.

Cleaning closets costs nothing and makes a huge impact on buyers.

You may want to completely empty each closet as you work.



Declutter

- Make sure you can open the door freely without something falling out.
- Keep closet doors closed. Keep closet floor clear of clutter.
- Store some clothes or extra blankets/pillows in suitcases so closets don't look so full.
- Pack away or donate extra items on shelves.
- Use clothes hamper with a lid in the closet of each bedroom.
- Get shoes off floor and put in clear containers to store on upper shelves.
- Remove items from back of the door hooks. They make it hard to open the door completely and increase the look of clutter.
- Make sure items in each closet fit closet's purpose – foyer, linen closet, pantry, coat, or bedroom closet.
- Easiest way to declutter closets, drawers, or cupboards:
 - Remove everything, sort through, and keep only what is needed.
 - Clean or paint.
 - Clean, replace, and face all items.
 - Group like items together and use organizers.
 - Use the same kind and color of hangers.
 - Hang clothes, by color, in groups all facing the same direction.

Pantries:

- Leave half of the shelves clear.
- No food items on kitchen counters. They should be in the pantry or in cupboards.
- Do not buy in bulk while your house is on the market.

Linen Closets:

- Put sheet sets together. Whole sets can be folded and stored in a pillow case.

- Put bath towels together folded in thirds with the folded edge showing.

Coat Closets:

- No coat trees full of coats. Store coats on hangers in closets.
- Keep only seasonal coats in closet.



Clean

- Clean inside all closets.
- Sweep and clean floors.



Repair

- Install ceiling light if needed.
- Make sure closet doors operate freely.



Neutralize

- Paint inside of closets a bright white color.



Make it Fabulous!

- Replace wire hangers with same color plastic or wooden ones.
- Hang clothes in the same direction, by color.
- Group same size and like items together (Example: pants, dress shirts, suits).
- Use clear boxes for shoes, belts, and small items.
- Use decorative box or small dresser to store hats, mittens, and gloves.

10. Hallways



Declutter

- Remove plastic runners from carpets.
- Eliminate family photos.
- At back door, keep calendar, message center, and to-do list area to a minimum or put on inside of cabinet doors.
- Store recyclables out of sight or in garage.
- Check condition of rug and use non-slip pad under rug.



Clean

- Paint or clean walls and ceilings.
- Scrub and polish floors.
- Clean and polish woodwork.
- Polish doorknobs and light fixtures.



Repair

- Repair holes if you take down pictures. Fill holes with spackle and dab of matching paint.
- Tighten doorknobs and fix squeaky hinges on doors.
- Secure thresholds. Replace rotted or cracked wood.
- Replace and match broken switch plates and outlet covers.



Neutralize

- Remove wallpaper and paint hall a neutral color.
- Remove nameplates and other items from bedroom doors.



Make it Fabulous!

- Use a mirror at the end of the hallway to add brightness and depth.

11. Home Office

Staging a bedroom as a home office makes sense if you have at least 4 bedrooms.

Use a room on the first floor if possible.



Declutter

- A home office should not include:
 - Toys
 - TV
 - Exercise equipment
 - Out-of-season clothes
 - Craft projects
 - Laundry items (Example: ironing board)
 - Bed
- An office should not have papers lying around.
- Never face desk into the room with computer wires and cables draping down front of the desk.
- Back desk up to a wall if cords will be a problem.
- Do not have computer passwords in sight (Example: on Post-it notes)
- Window treatments are not necessary in a home office but shades can be used to eliminate sunlight glare on the computer screen.
- Remove file cabinets if possible.



Clean

- Clean windows.
- Launder or replace window treatments.
- Wash wood floors or clean carpets.
- Clean and polish woodwork and doors.
- Wash and clean lighting fixtures and lamps.



Repair

- Repair windows.
- Patch and repair walls and ceilings.
- Replace and match broken switch plates and outlet covers.



Neutralize

- Paint a restful, neutral color.
- Remove distracting posters and personal belongings.
- This is the only room where professional certificates or awards are permitted but it is best if they can be stored or packed early.

Make it Fabulous!

- Feng Shui for offices:
 - Never sit with your back to the door.
 - Having the desk face the door puts you in a power position.
 - Do not have the computer facing the door.
 - Include an upholstered chair.

12. Laundry Room



Declutter

- Straighten laundry area. Put soaps and cleaners away or reduce the number and store neatly on a shelf.
- Keep counters and sinks clean and empty.
- Remove hangers and hanging laundry.
- Use the dryer to store things for last minute showings.
- Put away ironing board.
- Take outgrown clothes to charity or consignment store.



Clean

- Clean washer and dryer.
- Clean and deodorize pet areas.



Repair

- Make sure light bulbs work.
- Make sure dryer is vented to the outside.
- Make sure appliances are in working order.
- Make certain pipes, laundry connections, and exhaust pipes are in working order.
- Repair windows.
- Replace and match broken switch plates and outlet covers.



Neutralize

- Paint laundry area even if in the basement.



Make it Fabulous!

- Add a green plant or flower.
- Add wire shelving unit over appliances if there are no shelves. Showcase with folded white towels and a large, clear, glass container with white laundry powder.

13. Basement

A properly-staged basement can add an extra room to your house.



Declutter

- If you've had boxes in storage for a long time, go through them to see if you want to eliminate those items.
- Condense storage piles in basement to far corner and use plastic containers. Consolidate smaller boxes into larger ones.
- Remove paint cans, oil, cleaning fluids, old electronic equipment, tires, and lumber.
- If basement has a bar, only one or two liquor bottles are appropriate. Take down posters and family photos.
- Pick up critter traps.
- Store tools, shop equipment, and projects.



Clean

- Be aware of smells, musty odors, and dampness. Use dehumidifier, air cleaner, or air deodorant. Open windows often while home is for sale.
- Wipe down furnace and hot water tank.
- Clear drains.
- Vacuum basement floors and ceilings.
- Remove window treatments and wash windows.



Repair

- Ensure stairs to basement are clean, sturdy, and equipped with a handrail.
- Repair structure defects, like cracks in the walls or floor.
- Light fixtures should work. Replace spent bulbs.
- Clean and repair sump pump if necessary.
- Repair walls and ceilings. Make sure no water damage remains.



Neutralize

- If walls can be painted, apply a deep, rich, bold color. It makes the area look inviting and expensive.
- Consider sanding and painting paneling. (This is the most common suggestion that professional stagers make for updating paneled walls.)

- Paint bare concrete floors with grey concrete paint.
- Replace dated carpeting.



Make it Fabulous!

- Set up an area in basement as extra living space. (Family room, play room, bedroom, office.)
- Make sure basement looks large, cleared out, and full of potential.
- Create vignettes – game table and chairs or carpeted area with extra furniture. Make use of stored furniture you have in the basement.
- Divide basement into zones – play area, hobby area. Use inexpensive bound carpet remnant to anchor each area.
- Stage project on work bench.

14. Garage



Declutter

- Don't store so many items that your car won't fit.
- Hang tools, sports equipment, and lawn and garden equipment on the wall with organizers.
- Store paint cans in the basement where temperature changes will not affect the paint.
- Don't block doors leading out of garage.
- Remove everything from carports.
- Keep workbench uncluttered.
- Buy small bookshelf for shoes and other loose items.
- Use plastic storage container for balls and outside toys.
- Hang bikes from hooks in the ceiling.



Clean

- Hose out garage. Use special cleaner to remove oil stains.
- Clean windows.



Repair

- Test garage door openers. Make sure safety features work properly.



Neutralize

- Paint walls with white paint.
- Consider painting floor with gray concrete paint.



Make it Fabulous!

- Always keep garage doors down while home is on the market.
- Keep cars in the garage while home is being shown.
- Move boats and RVs to a storage facility.

15. Attic



Declutter

- Lay plywood on top of slats so you can store boxes there.
- Box and store, sell, or give away extra items. Neatly stack boxes so they don't block the buyer's view.



Clean

- Sweep and mop attic floors.
- Remove cobwebs.



Repair

- Make sure pull-down ladder is sturdy and in good condition.
- Provide adequate light. Add clip-on lights if needed.



Make it Fabulous!

- If attic is finished, set up usage zones for holiday decorations, suitcases, etc.
- If attic can be used as an extra room, stage it that way.