

Preparing a Home for a Professional Photo Shoot

It's important for prospective buyers to make an emotional connection with the home being listed by being able to "see" themselves living there. There are a few simple preparations that can be easily accomplished to ensure the home is presented in its best light and enhance the quality of the photography.

The home should be prepared prior to the photography appointment using this checklist or a customized list from an agent or stager. This will ensure the photographer can focus on creating great images within the allotted time.

Interior (All Rooms)

- Clean the entire house – vacuum and mop the floors, dust, etc.
- Repair dripping faucets, cracked tiles, broken shutters or blinds, and any other items
- Replace any burned out light bulbs in fixtures and lamps
- Remove clutter and excessive decorative items from bookshelves, tables, and cabinets
- Remove piles of newspapers, magazines, books, mail, and other paper
- Hide remote controls, mobile docking stations and charging cables
- Conceal all exposed cables and power cords as best as possible
- Remove throw rugs and runners in entryways, kitchens, and bathrooms
- Tuck trashcans out of view in a closet or cupboard
- Turn OFF all ceiling fans
- Turn OFF all TVs, computers, monitors, gaming consoles, and other electronics
- Turn ON all overhead lights and lamps
- Draperies and blinds should be open and uniform for all windows in each room

Exterior

- Remove all vehicles from driveways and do not park directly in front of the house
- Close the garage doors
- Move all garbage cans and recycling bins out of sight
- Put away all garden tools, including water hoses and sprinklers
- Remove all children's toys, goals, nets, balls, and bikes from the yard
- Trim the grass and bushes, rake the yard, and put out fresh pine straw and/or mulch
- Sweep driveways, sidewalks, walkways, patios, decks, stairs, and any hard surfaces
- Remove covers from well-maintained grills and smokers; cover neglected ones
- Arrange outdoor furniture and cushions; be sure pillows and cushions are fresh, not faded
- Open any outdoor umbrellas
- For pools, remove any debris, the pool sweep, pool cleaning equipment, and any pool toys
- Turn on any water features, such as waterfalls and bubblers
- Visible areas under decks should be free of unsightly items and clutter
- Remove cobwebs from door frames and eaves
- Be sure roof and gutters are free of leaves and other debris
- Remove empty planters
- A planter of flowers at or near the front entrance is a nice touch

Living and Family Room

- Clean the interior of the fireplace and light it
- De-clutter the fireplace mantel and hearth
- Fluff and arrange furniture cushions and pillows on all seating areas
- Remove children's and pets toys

Bedrooms

- Be sure the beds are neatly made, and pillows are fluffed and neatly arranged
- Bed linens, bed skirts, and throws should be smooth
- Items stored under beds should be out of sight
- Remove any wall posters, window stickers, etc.
- Remove all personal items from nightstands
- Remove clutter from dressers and book shelves
- If there is a fireplace, clean the interior and light it
- Clothes should be neatly hung or folded and put away
- If the closet is to be photographed, be sure it's neatly organized and cleaned
- For kid's rooms, organize small toys into baskets or wicker bins; put away larger toys
- For nurseries, remove or hide items such as diaper pails, changing table pads, etc.

Kitchen

- Clean all major appliances – refrigerator, oven, range hood, etc.
- Clear off counter tops and remove small appliances - toaster, coffee pot, knife block, can opener, etc.
- Thoroughly clean and wipe down all countertops
- Remove all items from refrigerator doors, including photos, notes, magnets, and paper
- Remove all floor mats
- Put away all dishes and dish towels
- Be sure the sink is clean and free of dishes, dish racks, scrub brushes, sponges, sponge holders, and soap dispensers
- Turn on any under-counter lighting and the stove light
- Decorating with a bowl of fresh fruit or small bouquet of flowers is a nice touch

Dining Room

- Remove clutter from china cabinet and buffet
- If the china cabinet has a light, turn it on
- Clean and polish the dining room table
- Straighten all chairs and ensure they are spaced evenly around the table
- Be sure table is centered under the chandelier if possible
- Add a colorful centerpiece to the table, such as candles or flowers
- Optional: Set the table with nice dinnerware using decorative place settings

Bathrooms

- Remove all personal-care items, such as soaps, toothbrushes, brushes and combs, medications, etc. from counter tops
- Remove shampoo, soap, loofas, razors, etc. from showers and bath tubs
- Remove all floor mats and throw rugs
- Thoroughly clean mirrors, bath tubs, showers, toilets, and countertops
- If you have a glass shower door, clean and squeegee to remove haze, mold, or mildew
- Toilet seats should be down and lids closed

- Hide toilet brushes and laundry baskets
- Remove kids' stools and bath toys
- Replace used towels and washcloths with clean, fluffy towels (white if possible)

Laundry Room

- Be sure all dirty laundry and laundry baskets are out of sight
- Close all cabinets
- Remove all items from counters if possible
- Clean the appliances and wipe down all countertops to ensure they're free of fingerprints, soap scum, etc.

Pets

- Pets should be contained in a hidden crate, garage, or outside
- Put away pet beds, toys, food dishes, and scratching posts
- Ensure floors, furniture, and beds are free of pet hair
- Ensure yard is free of pet waste

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