

If you're thinking of selling your home, keep in mind that buyers appreciate a clean look in the homes they view. You can increase the value of your home and decrease the time it takes to sell by making a few simple improvements.

Aroma is the first thing prospective buyers notice when they step inside a home. To eliminate odors, steam clean your carpet and wash walls and floors with household cleaners and disinfectants. Keep your home smelling fresh by burning candles or potpourri, boiling a pot of cinnamon sticks or putting a dab of vanilla on cold light bulbs before turning them on.

Nothing makes a home look newer faster than painting. Painting your walls and removing outdated wallpaper may be the best interior improvements you can make. For broader appeal, paint in neutral colors such as beige, white, off-white, or gray. These colors suggest newness and cleanliness and can brighten a dull or outdated room. If your carpet is badly worn, outdated or stained, consider replacing it. If your carpet is heavily soiled, you may want to have it professionally cleaned. Brighten the interior of your home by cleaning your windows and opening your curtains to let light in. Clean hanging light fixtures and add the highest-wattage bulbs allowed. Below are 20 suggestions to help you sell your home.

### **Make the Most of that First Impression:**

A well-manicured lawn, neatly trimmed shrubs and a clutter-free porch welcome prospects. So does a freshly painted - or at least freshly scrubbed - front door. If it's autumn, rake the leaves. If it's winter, shovel the walkways. The fewer obstacles between prospects and the true appeal of your home, the better.

### **Invest a Few Hours for Future Dividends:**

Here's your chance to clean up in real estate. Clean up in the living room, the bathroom, the kitchen. If your wood-work is scuffed or the paint is fading, consider some minor redecoration. Fresh wallpaper adds charm and value to your property. Prospects would rather see how great your home really looks than hear how great it could look, "with a little work."

### **Check Faucets and Bulbs:**

Dripping water rattles the nerves, discolors sinks and suggests faulty or worn-out plumbing. Burned out bulbs leave prospects in the dark. Don't let little problems detract from what's right with your home.

### **Don't Shut Out a Sale:**

If cabinets or closet doors stick in your home, you can be sure they will also stick in a prospect's mind. Don't try to explain away sticky situations when you can easily plane them away. A little effort on your part can smooth the way toward a closing.

### **Think Safety**

Homeowners learn to live with all kinds of self-set booby traps: roller skates on the stairs, festooned extension cords, slippery throw rugs and low hanging overhead lights. Make your residence as non-perilous as possible for uninitiated visitors.

### **Make Room for Space:**

Remember, potential buyers are looking for more than just comfortable living space. They're looking for storage space, too. Make sure your attic and basement are clean and free of unnecessary items.

### **Consider Your Closets:**

The better organized a closet, the larger it appears. Now's the time to box up those unwanted clothes and donate them to charity.

### **Make Your Bathrooms Sparkle:**

Bathrooms sell homes, so let them shine. Check and repair damaged or unsightly caulking in the tubs and showers. For added allure, display your best towels, mats and shower curtains.

### **Create Dream Bedrooms:**

Wake up prospects to the cozy comforts of your bedrooms. For a spacious look, get rid of excess furniture. Colorful bedspreads and fresh curtains are a must.

### **Open up in the Daytime:**

Let the sun shine in! Pull back your curtains and drapes so prospects can see how bright and cheery your home is.

### **Lighten up at Night:**

Turn on the excitement by turning on all your lights - both inside and outside - when showing your home in the evening. Lights add color and warmth, and make prospects feel welcome.

### **Avoid Crowd Scenes:**

Potential buyers often feel like intruders when they enter a home filled with people. Rather than giving your house the attention it deserves, they're likely to hurry through. Keep the company present to a minimum.

### **Watch Your Pets:**

Dogs and cats are great companions, but not when you're showing your home. Pets have a talent for getting underfoot. So do everybody a favor: Keep Kitty and Spot outside, or at least out of the way.

### **Think Volume:**

Rock-and-roll will never die. But it might kill a real estate transaction. When it's time to show your home, it's time to turn down the stereo or TV.

### **Relax:**

Be friendly, but don't try to force conversation. Prospects want to view your home with a minimum of distraction.

### **Don't Apologize:**

No matter how humble your abode, never apologize for its shortcomings. If a prospect volunteers a derogatory comment about your home's appearance, let an experienced Real Estate Agent handle the situation.

### **Keep a Low Profile:**

Nobody knows your home as well as you. But a Real Estate Agent knows buyers - what they need and what they want. Your Agent will have an easier time articulating the virtues of your home if you stay in the background.

### **Don't Turn Your Home into a Second-Hand Store:**

When prospects come to view your home, don't distract them with offers to sell those furnishings you no longer need. You may lose the biggest sale of all.

### **Defer to Experience:**

When prospects want to talk price, terms, or other real estate matters, let them speak to an expert - your Real Estate Agent.

### **Help Your Agent:**

Your Real Estate Agent will have an easier time selling your home if showings are scheduled through his or her office. Offer to keep an eye on the brochure box attached to your sign and make sure it is always filled with flyers. Try to accommodate prospective buyers when they want to see your home.