



# How to Get Your Home Ready for the Market

Getting your home ready for the market can be one of the more daunting tasks required in selling. There is so much to do; it can be difficult to know where to start first and what's most important to tackle. To present your home in the best light possible, routine household cleaning and these tips will make your home shine to buyers.

## Declutter Every Room

The accumulation of stuff over the years may not look crowded to you, but potential buyers need to be able to see the home without all the distractions. Typically, the rule of thumb is that sellers need to remove about half of their belongings to reach the “decluttered” point attractive to buyers. At Baker Realty, we tell our sellers to remove half of the items in their drawers, cabinets, closets, and on desks, tables, and shelves.

Don't worry! You don't need to throw everything away or move it to your next home just yet. Box things up in storage containers or cardboard boxes and store them in the garage. Buyers will overlook a full and messy garage; they expect that the seller is storing items there before the home sells. Making the home look decluttered is one of the more important tasks a seller can do when preparing their home for the market.

## Make the Home Look Like a Model Home

Depersonalize the home by removing family photos, kids' artwork, personal trinkets, and collectible items. A few decorative pieces can remain, but the home shouldn't have things that reflect personal preferences that might distract buyers. What few items do remain for showings should be tasteful and muted as much as possible.

## Clean the Home-Inside and Out

In addition to routine cleaning tasks, give some rooms a deep clean as well. Buyers pay very close attention to kitchens and bathrooms, so make sure to provide these rooms with a full top-to-bottom cleaning.

### Kitchen

Appliances catch the eyes of buyers, so make them shine. Clean the stovetop of grease and grit and the inside and outside of the oven and microwave. Also, make sure to clean the inside of the refrigerator, wiping off shelves, drawers, and interior walls. If you have a stainless steel sink, get a stainless steel cleaner to remove built-up grime and discoloration. Make stainless steel appliances shine and keep them fingerprint-free as much as possible.

In most homes, refrigerators serve as a “catch-all” for school reminders, family photos, postcards, and an assortment of magnets collected over the years. However, refrigerators are an appliance, not a photo shelf. Therefore, sellers should remove everything from the refrigerator. It should not have a single photo, paper, postcard, or magnet on it.

## Bathroom

Clear everything off the counters. A decorative piece can remain if tasteful, but it's best to remove everything. Clean all mirrors and shower doors, so they are streak-free and reflective. Clean the inside and outside of toilets, showers, and bathtubs. Buyers might also look in the bathroom drawers and shower stall, so it's best to declutter both of these places as well.

## Bedrooms

The master bedroom will most likely be the room buyers will sleep in. Make it look fantastic by removing everything from dresser and table surfaces. Lamps can stay on nightstands, but hide any other photos, cables, or knick-knacks. Make this room look inviting by making the bed with a simple, luxurious cover and fluffing all the pillows. Move any exercise equipment into the garage, not the closet.

A highly overlooked space is the master closet. Make sure to remove at least half the clothes, shoes, and other items in the closet. Having a full closet will make even a large walk-in look small.

## Exterior

Curb appeal is a significant selling point for any buyer. Make sure to store yard tools from the front and back yards. Take a look at the home from the curb or the driveway and assess if there are some unattractive features that you can address. Consider trimming the trees and shrubs, mowing the lawn, cleaning the windows, clearing the walk to the front door, etc. The path from the curb to the front door will be the first impression potential buyers have of the home. Make sure that there is nothing out of place or off-putting in this short distance.

## Add Finishing Touches

Once everything is nice and clean, it's time to add a few touches to make the house feel more like home.

Try adding fresh, bright flower arrangements to the dining table and smaller arrangements in the bathrooms. On the back patio and front porch, consider adding flowerpots with seasonal blooming flowers.

Add a fresh coat of paint to one or two of the most visited rooms. A new coat of paint will cover up any stains, wear, dirt, etc. that have built up over the years. Even an inexpensive paint will do the trick, but make sure it is a muted, neutral color.

Leave blinds down but maximize natural lighting by adjusting them to let in as much light as possible. Having clean windows will help the light shine through and make the room look bright and inviting. Don't neglect the light fixtures in the home, as well. Check all lights to make sure the bulbs work and look clean and bright.

Getting your home ready for the market may sound overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be. Follow these guidelines and your home will look incredible to potential buyers. If you are considering selling your home, contact us at Baker Realty to get the process started. We love walking our clients through this process, so they have confidence every step of the way.

# Checklist for Getting Your Home Ready for the Market: Room-by-Room

Get your home ready to show to potential buyers in a neat, organized checklist. Go through every room in the home and check off each task after it has been completed. Make sure to read the entire list first in case you need to get additional supplies or equipment.

## For the whole home, the rule of thumb is to remove half of all belongings in the home! Some other 'whole home' tasks are:

- ☐ Check all lights and lamps for burnt out bulbs. Ideal types of light bulbs for the whole home are Daylight LEDs of the same brand. All lights and lamps should be on for showings; open the curtains and blinds too!
- ☐ Remove all items from floor that don't belong on the floor...stacks of papers, books, toys, etc.
- ☐ Hide stacks of papers/bills/magazines, whether this is in the kitchen, office, or bedroom – store and file these papers.
- ☐ Clean the inside and outside of all windows. Remove window screens and store them in the garage.
- ☐ Wipe dust off of all baseboards and blinds.
- ☐ Clean all doorknobs and drawer pulls.
- ☐ Hide all cables and chargers.
- ☐ Consider hiring professional carpet cleaners or renting a carpet cleaner for all carpet in the home. If the home has a lot of tile, consider hiring professionals to clean the grout.

## Living/Dining Room

- ☐ Put away all remote controls.
- ☐ Put away all personal items from shelves, countertops, and tabletops. Centerpieces and decorative items can remain visible.
- ☐ Reduce items on decorative shelves.
- ☐ Straighten pillows, blankets, and chairs.
- ☐ Vacuum all furniture, carpet, rugs.
- ☐ Apply a fresh coat of paint. It doesn't have to be expensive, even a cheap neutral color will make the room look nice and fresh.
- ☐ All chairs should be pushed in and leaves removed from dining table.

## Kitchen

- ☐ Remove ALL items from kitchen countertops and islands, including countertop appliances.
- ☐ Remove EVERYTHING from the refrigerator doors.
- ☐ Hide pet dishes, dish towels, sponges, and trash cans.
- ☐ Remove kitchen rugs.
- ☐ Clean outside and inside of oven, stove top, dishwasher, and microwave.
- ☐ Clean the sink with stainless steel cleaner. Clean faucet and handles with a less abrasive cleaner.
- ☐ Wipe down all cabinets and drawers.
- ☐ Remove half the items from kitchen drawers.
- ☐ Hide trash and recycling cans.

## Bedrooms

- ☐ Rent a carpet cleaner or hire professional carpet cleaners if these rooms have carpet.
- ☐ Remove ALL items from tables and countertops. Exceptions are lamps.
- ☐ Clean mirrors of streaks and dust.
- ☐ Make beds, fluff and straighten pillows. Remove stuffed animals and toys from kids' beds.
- ☐ Hide trash cans and Diaper Genies.
- ☐ Remove any exercise equipment.
- ☐ Remove at least half of clothes, shoes, and other items from closets.
- ☐ Remove all items from closet floor except shoes.

## Bathrooms

- ☐ Remove ALL items from bathroom countertops.
- ☐ Towels hung on rack, straight and neat. Remove any towels hung on pegs or over shower stall doors.
- ☐ Clean all mirrors and shower doors.
- ☐ Clean toilets and bathtubs.
- ☐ Make all faucets and handles shine.
- ☐ Put the toilet seats DOWN.
- ☐ Empty the shower of shampoos, soaps, etc. Put away shower organizers.
- ☐ Leave the shower curtain open, if there is one.
- ☐ Add a small vase with fresh flowers.

## Exterior

- ☐ Remove cars from the driveway.
- ☐ Mow the lawn and mulch, if necessary.
- ☐ Trim the trees and shrubs. Shrubs need to be trimmed off the home.
- ☐ Remove ALL lawn equipment, debris, recycle and waste cans from sight.
- ☐ Roll up hoses and hide sprinkler attachments.
- ☐ Open patio umbrellas.
- ☐ Clean front door and entryway.
- ☐ Add flowerpots with bright flowers to front porch and back patio.
- ☐ Repaint address on curb in large, clear numbers.

## Pets

- ☐ Crate or contain your pets so they don't show up in pictures.
- ☐ Remove pet carriers, crates, pet dishes, and litter boxes from sight.
- ☐ Put away all pet toys.
- ☐ Vacuum or remove as much pet hair as possible.