



Prudential

Gateway Real Estate

There are many things involved in preparing your home to sell. First and foremost you need to remove any emotion from the equation. It is important to think of your house as a marketable commodity. Property. Real estate. Your goal is to get others to see it as their potential home, not yours. If you do not consciously make this decision, you can inadvertently create a situation where it takes longer to sell your property.

The reason you want to "de-personalize" your home is because you want buyers to view it as their potential home. When a potential homebuyer sees your family photos hanging on the wall, it puts your own brand on the home and momentarily shatters their illusions about owning the house. Therefore, put away family photos, trophies and souvenirs.

Part of preparing a house for sale is to remove clutter. This is the hardest thing for most people to do because they are emotionally attached to everything in the house. After years of living in the same home, clutter collects in such a way that may not be evident to the homeowner. However, it does affect the way buyers see the home, even if you do not realize it. Clutter collects on shelves, counter tops, drawers, closets, garages, attics and basements.

Take a step back and pretend you are a buyer. Let a friend or your real estate agent help point out areas of clutter. The kitchen is a great place to start... put that toaster in the cabinet, clean and organize inside your cabinets (they will be opened and you want space to be abundant for the new buyer). You also want to remove closet clutter, too much furniture in certain rooms and storage area clutter. Storage areas such as the garage need to be as neat and clean.

Take a close look at your home's interior. All your sink fixtures should look shiny and new. If this cannot be accomplished by cleaning, buy new ones where needed. If you don't buy something fancy, this can be accomplished inexpensively and they are fairly easy to install. Make sure all the hot and cold water knobs are easy to turn, the faucets do not leak and that you have good water pressure with no stains on the porcelain.

Painting can be your best investment when selling your home. It is not a very expensive operation and often you can do it yourself. Check all the ceilings and walls for areas that need to be touched up with paint or patched/re-painted.

Flooring is a critical component of presenting a home. Unless your carpet appears old and worn, or it is definitely an outdated style or color, you probably should do nothing more than hire a good carpet cleaner. Also, be sure to repair or replace any broken floor tiles.

Check all of your **windows and doors** to make sure they open and close easily. Be sure there are no cracked or broken panes. If there are issues with opening windows or doors you can always spray them with WD40.

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For those who smoke, you might want to minimize smoking indoors while trying to sell your home. You could also purchase an ozone spray that helps to remove odors without creating a masking odor. Also, pets of all kinds create odors that you may have become used to but are immediately noticeable to prospective homebuyers. Be sure and clean your home to rid of these odors.

The exterior of your home is a homebuyer's first impression. Most real estate advice tells you to work on the outside of the house first, but unless there is a major project involved, we believe it is best to do it last. There are two main reasons for this. First, the first steps in preparing the interior of the house are easier. They also help develop the proper mind set required for selling - beginning to think of your "home" as a marketable commodity. Second, the exterior is the most important.

So take a walk across the street and take a good look at your house. Look at nearby houses, too, and see how yours compares. Confirm that your **landscaping** is at least average for the neighborhood. If you have an area for flowers make sure they're vibrant and alive. Your lawn should be evenly cut, freshly edged, well watered, and free of brown spots. You also want to rake loose leaves and grass cuttings. You want to make sure there are no wood chips anywhere outside, period. There should be **no wood touching the home** from the ground – inspectors really look closely at these items. The same items hold true for the backyard. Also, if you have a pool or dogs keep those areas clean, tidy and free of debris.

The big decision is whether to **paint or not to paint**. When you look at your house from across the street, does it look tired and faded? If so, a paint job may be in order. It is often a very good investment and really spruces up the appearance of a house, adding dollars to offers from potential homebuyers.

change your return air filters and clean both the return and the vents. This is one of those items that home inspectors really look at and comment on and it shows whether or not someone has really taken care of their home.

The front door should be especially sharp, since it is the entryway into the house. Polish the door fixture so it gleams. If the door needs refinishing or repainting, make sure to get that done. Make sure the lock works easily and the key fits properly. When a homebuyer comes to visit your home, the agent uses the key from the lock box to unlock the door. If there is trouble working the lock while everyone else stands around twiddling their thumbs, this sends a negative first impression to prospective homebuyers.