

One for the Money, Two for the Show: Prepare the Inside of your House for Showing

Once you've minimized the clutter in your home, clearing out excess items and furniture, you'll be ready to concentrate on repairs, cleaning, and decoration. Your goal is to get each room looking its sharpest and most fresh—the better your house looks, the greater your chances that it will sell quickly and for top dollar. Concentrate on the following areas to get your home into selling shape.

Walls and Ceiling:

Examine all the ceilings and walls for water stains or dirt. We don't often look closely at the walls that surround us, so be careful—there could be residual stains from leaks that have long been fixed, or an accumulation of dirt in an area you hadn't noticed.

Painting the walls may be the best investment you can make when preparing your home to sell. You can do it yourself, and relatively inexpensively. Remember, the colors you choose should appeal to the widest range of buyers, not just to your own personal taste. A shade of off-white is the best bet for most rooms, as it makes the space appear larger and bright.

Carpet and Flooring:

Does your carpet appear old, or worn in areas? Is it an outdated color or pattern? If the answer to either of these questions is yes, you should consider replacing it. You can find replacement carpeting that is relatively inexpensive. And always opt for neutral colors.

Any visibly broken floor tiles should be replaced. But make sure you don't spend too much on these replacements. The goal isn't to re-vamp the entire home, but, rather, to avoid causing any negative impressions due to noticeable damage or wear around the house.

Doors and Windows:

Check the entire house for any cracked or chipped window panes. If they are damaged in any way, replace them. Test all windows, as well, to ensure they open and close easily. Try spraying WD40 on any with which you're having trouble. This should loosen them up.

The same can be done with sticking or creaking doors. A shot of WD40 on the hinges should make the creak disappear. Check to make sure each door knob turns smoothly and polish it until it is gleaming.

Odor Check:

Begin by airing out the house. Chances are, you'd be the last person to notice any strange or unpleasant smell that may be immediately apparent to visitors.

If you smoke indoors, you'll want to minimize the smell before you show your home. Take your cigarettes outside for a period of time before you begin showing. Ozone sprays also help eliminate those lingering odours without leaving a masking, perfumed smell.

Be careful if you have a pet. You may have become used to the particular smell of your cat or dog. Make sure litter boxes are kept clean. Keep your dog outdoors as much as possible. You may want to intermittently sprinkle your carpets with carpet freshener as well.

Plumbing and Fixtures:

All sink fixtures should look shiny and fresh. Buy new ones if scrubbing fails to get them into shape. Replacing them can be done fairly easily and inexpensively. Check to make sure all hot and cold faucets are easy to turn and that none of the faucets leaks. If you do find a leaking faucet, change the washer. Again, this is an easy and inexpensive procedure.

Finally, check the water pressure of each faucet, and look for any stains on the porcelain of the sinks or tubs.

Once you've covered all these bases, your house will be in prime shape for its time on the market. Congratulations—you're ready to begin showing!