

## 21 Staging tips for selling your home fast

If you are planning to put your house on the market this summer, it goes without saying that you are hoping to sell your home as quickly as possible and get your asking price. Set the stage for success with these 21 tips for styling and upgrading your home, and see results -- fast.



**1. Boost curb appeal.** This is something you always hear, and with very good reason. Many people thinking of touring your home will do a quick drive-by first, often deciding on the spot if it is even worth a look inside. Make sure your home is ready to lure in onlookers with these tips:

- Power wash siding and walkways
- Hang easy-to-read house numbers
- Plant blooming flowers and fresh greenery
- Mow lawn, and reseed or add fresh sod as needed
- Wash front windows
- Repaint or stain the porch floor as needed



**2. Welcome visitors with an inviting porch.** Even if you have only a tiny stoop, make it say "welcome home" with a clean doormat, potted plants in bloom and -- if you have room -- one or two pieces of neat porch furniture. Keep your porch lights on in the evenings, in case potential buyers drive by. Illuminating the front walk with solar lights is a nice extra touch, especially if you will be showing the house during the evening.



**3. Get your house sparkling clean.** From shining floors and gleaming windows to clean counters and scrubbed grout, every surface should sparkle. This is the easiest (well, maybe not easiest, but certainly the cheapest) way to help your home put its best foot forward. You may want to hire pros to do some of the really tough stuff, especially if you have a large house. Don't skimp -- this step is key!



**4. Clear away all clutter.** If you are serious about staging your home, all clutter must go, end of story. It's not easy, and it may even require utilizing offsite storage (or a nice relative's garage) temporarily, but it is well worth the trouble. Clean and clear surfaces, floors, cupboards and closets equal more space in the eyes of potential buyers, so purge anything unnecessary or unsightly.

**But it's my style!** Guess what? It may not be the style of those seeking to buy a house in your neighborhood. So even if you have an awesome vintage-chic look going on, rein it in for the sake of appealing to the most number of people. You can bring your personal style back into play in your new home.



**5. Strike a balance between clean and lived-in.** Yes, I know I just said to get rid of all your clutter (and you deserve a big pat on the back if you did it), but now it's time to judiciously bring back a few elements that will really make your home appealing. Think vases of cut flowers, a basket of fresh farmer's market produce on the kitchen counter or a bowl of lemons beside the sink.



**6. Style your dining room table.** The dining room is often a blind spot in decorating the home. Between dinners, a large dining table can look bare and uninviting, so styling it up with visitors in mind can increase the appeal. An oversize arrangement can look too stiff and formal, so try lining up a series of smaller vessels down the center of the table instead.



**7. Take a good look at your floors.** At the bare minimum, give all floors a thorough cleaning (and steam clean carpets), but consider having wood floors refinished if they are in poor shape. If you don't want to invest in refinishing floors, the strategic placement of area rugs can go a long way.



**8. Rearrange your furniture.** In the living room, symmetrical arrangements usually work well. Pull your furniture off the walls and use pairs (of sofas, chairs, lamps) to create an inviting conversation area.



**9. Choose sophisticated neutral colors.** Now is not the time to experiment with that "fun"-looking lime green. But that doesn't mean you need to go all white, either. Rich midtone neutrals like mocha and "greige" create a sophisticated backdrop that makes everything look more pulled together.



**10. Create a gender-neutral master bedroom.** Appeal to everyone with a clean, tailored master bedroom, free of personal items and clutter. You can't go wrong with clean, crisp linens, tasteful artwork and a blanket folded at the foot of the bed.



**11. Open those closets!** Open-house visitors will peek inside your closets. Closet space can be a make-it-or-break-it selling point for buyers, so show yours off to their full advantage by giving excess stuff the heave-ho. Again, this is really important, so even if you need to

store a few boxes elsewhere, it's worth it. Aim to have 20 to 30 percent open space in each closet to give the impression of spaciousness.



**12. Clean up toys.** Of course there will be families with children looking at your home, but just because they have kids too doesn't mean seeing toys strewn everywhere will sell them on the place. When people are house hunting, they are imagining a fresh start. Show them that in this house, it is possible to have a beautifully organized kids' room, and they might be swayed.





**13. Use "extra" rooms wisely.** If you have been using a spare bedroom as a dumping ground for odd pieces of furniture and boxes of junk, it's time to clean up your act. Each room should have a clearly defined purpose, so think about what potential buyers might like to see here. An office? A guest room? Another kids' room? Whether you buy inexpensive furnishings, rent them, or borrow some from friends, making a real room out of a junk room will have a big payoff.



**14. Try a pedestal sink to maximize space.** If you have a small bathroom but a huge cabinet-style sink, consider swapping it out for a simple pedestal version. Your bathroom will appear instantly bigger.



Traditional Bathroom design

**15. Use only perfect personal accents.** Especially in the bathroom, it is important that anything left out for visitors to see is pristine. If you have a gorgeous fluffy white bathrobe, hanging it on a decorative hook on the door can be an attractive accent -- but if your robe is more of the nubby blue floral variety, you might want to hide it away. Look at every detail with a visitor's eye -- bars of soap should be fresh and clean, towels spotless, the garbage always emptied (you get the idea).



**16. Entice people to explore the whole house.** By placing something that draws the eye at the top of the stairs, in hallways or in corners, you can pique curiosity and keep potential buyers interested throughout a whole home tour. A piece of artwork, a painted accent wall, a window seat, a vase of flowers, a hanging light or even a small, colorful rug can all work to draw the eye.



Media Room design by [Toronto Media And Blogs 8Foot6](#)

**17. Show how you can use awkward areas.** If you have any room beneath the stairs, or a nook or alcove anywhere in your home, try to find a unique way to show it off. By setting up a small work station, a home command center with a bulletin board, or built-in shelving, your awkward spot becomes another selling point.



Traditional Kitchen design by [Chicago Architect COOK ARCHITECTURAL Design Studio](#)

**18. Beware pet odors.** Really, this can be a big one! If you have pets, get all rugs steam cleaned and be extra vigilant about vacuuming and washing surfaces. Also be sure to keep any extra-loved pet toys and doggie bones hidden when tours are scheduled.



Traditional Exterior design by [Burlington Architect Smith & Vasant Architects PC](#)

**19. Create a lifestyle people are looking for.** Generally speaking, you want to play up what your neighborhood or area is known for. Have a house in a quiet, grassy suburb? Hanging a hammock in your backyard and a bench swing on your porch could be the perfect touch.



Eclectic Patio design by [London Interior Designer Celia James](#)

**20. Stage the outdoors too.** Even if your condo has only a teensy postage stamp-size balcony, play it up with a cute cafe table and chairs, a cheerful tablecloth and even a little tray of dishes or a vase of flowers. When people look at this scene, they won't be thinking "small," they will be thinking, "What a charming spot to have breakfast!"



Traditional Landscape design by San Francisco Landscape Architect Shades Of Green Landscape Architecture

**21. Think seasonally.** Make sure your garden is in beautiful shape in the summer, and that any extra features you have, like a pool or a fire pit, are cleaned and ready to go. Take advantage of the cozy vibe of the season in autumn and winter, by building a fire in the fireplace and simmering hot apple cider on the stove.