

PREPARING YOUR HOME TO SELL

KITCHEN (MOST IMPORTANT ROOM)

- If the cabinets are worn, paint or refinish them.
- Clean the ventilating hood.
- Keep the counters clean and remove any appliances like the toaster, coffee maker, and can opener.
- Leave a nice smell in the kitchen (i.e. vanilla, cinnamon-apple, etc.).
- Remove hand towels and dishcloths from sink or hanging on the stove.

BATHROOMS

- Keep fresh towels in the bathroom.
- Remove stains from toilets, bathtubs, and sink.
- Keep sinks and mirrors shining.
- Repair dripping faucets.
- If sink and bathtub drain too slowly, unclog them.
- Replace old caulking around bathtubs if needed.
- Declutter countertops.

BEDROOMS

- Put away personal items so that buyers can see themselves living in the home.
- Straighten and organize the closets. Store out-of-season clothes so that the closets look larger.
- Have beds made and pillows standing up instead of laying flat.

APPEARANCES ARE EVERYTHING

- Wash windows and replace any broken glass. All windows must open and close.
- Make sure there is plenty of lighting, especially on the stairs.
- Remove heavy curtains that block windows.
- Replace burned-out light bulbs. Use brighter bulbs.
- Be sure every light switch works.
- If you have a fireplace, clean it out, and lay some logs in it to make it look inviting.

CEILING & WALLS

- Stick to neutral colors when painting and re-decorating.
- Have the walls in tip-top shape. Fix any cracks, dents, or knicks.
- Check ceilings for leak stains. Fix the cause of the damage, repair, and repaint.
- If your basement is dark and gloomy, paint the ceilings and walls a light color.

DOORS & FLOORS

- For doors that stick slightly, rub paraffin against the surface showing signs of wear.
- For sliding doors that stick, rub the tracks with paraffin or candle wax.
- For squeaky doors, use a lubricant spray (WD-40) to eliminate the squeaks.
- Clean your carpets, especially if you have pets.
- If the tile or laminate floor is badly worn, put down new flooring. If a single tile is loose, apply heat to the tile with an iron covered with a soft cloth, to soften the adhesive – then replace the tile.
- Make the floor shine. Clean any creaking boards or stair treads (drive two long finishing nails at opposing angles through the floor and sub-floor into the joist).
- Vacuum or sweep the garage floor.

ORGANIZE STORAGE

- Clean out the attic, basement, and garage. Dispose of everything you aren't moving.
- Package everything you won't need until you're settled in your new home.
- Stack items neatly against walls to make the garage look large.

EXTERIOR

- Invest in landscaping where it can be seen at first sight. A well-manicured lawn, neatly clipped shrubbery, and cleanly swept walks create a good first impression.
- Cut back over-grown shrubbery.
- Paint your house if necessary. This can do more for sales appeal than any other factor. If you decide against painting, at least consider painting front shutters and window frames.
- In winter, walks should be free of snow and ice.
- Inspect the roof, gutters, and shingles.
- Consider putting flowers outside the front door.
- Repaint the front door.
- Repair broken outdoor steps.
- Keep lawn closely cut and edged.
- Make house numbers visible and place lighting on them in the winter.

INEXPENSIVE TIPS FROM THE PROS

- Use Bar Keeper's Friend to remove water stains from stainless steel sinks and scratches in porcelain.
- Use a pumice stone to remove rust stains from toilet bowls, porcelain tubs, and sinks.
- Use baking soda and a wet cloth to remove stains from light countertops.
- Use white vinegar to remove carpet stains, and unclog shower heads, or clean kitchen sprayers.