

GETTING YOUR HOME READY TO SELL

HERE ARE A JUST A FEW RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. GET CLEANING

The No. 1-recommended improvement in Trulia's "Home Sale Maximizer Survey" has remained constant for several years: clean and de-clutter. In general, you want to clean the entire house and make sure that everything has its place.

Specifically:

- **Clean the bathroom(s) and put out fresh towels.** Close the lid on the toilets and make sure the bathroom mirrors sparkle.
- **Make sure the air is fresh.** That doesn't mean using air fresheners or candles, because some people are allergic to them. Instead, it means opening the windows occasionally to let the outside air in. It also means taking out the household trash, cleaning the cat box, washing the dog bed, making sure your supply of pet food is stored in Tupperware, and airing out the beds that people sleep in before making them. You might be used to the smell of your home, especially if you have pets, so if you're in doubt ask a good friend to come over and sniff your house.
- **Control clutter.** Try to get as many personal items off surfaces as possible. It's worthwhile to invest in an extra shelf or two for the closets. You want your prospective buyer to feel like there would be room in the home for all of their stuff. Linen, pantry and bedroom closets should be tidy and organized to show how much space there really is. The good news is this is a cheap fix, generally costing less than \$300.



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2. LET THERE BE LIGHT

Coming in second place on the survey is another fix that offers great bang for the buck: lightening and brightening. This means repairing broken light fixtures, putting in new bulbs, moving furniture away from windows, replacing dirty drapes, opening curtains and blinds for a showing, and washing windows.

3. LIFE IS A STAGE

Eighty percent of the agents surveyed recommend home staging, which includes old-fashioned tips like putting out fresh flowers and more new-fangled techniques like rearranging furniture for better sightlines. Try to keep a room's furnishings to two or three colors, and make sure that a potential buyer doesn't see the backs of all your furniture when she walks into a room.



4. KEEP OFF THE GRASS

Fourth on the survey is landscaping. Water and mow the lawn, get rid of dead leaves on the shrubs and put out new plants. Tidy up the entry/front door — curb appeal is what gets buyers in the door.

5. HOW HANDY ARE YOU?

Rounding out the top five is a great fix: making plumbing and electrical repairs. Stop toilets from gurgling, repair or replace leaky faucets, and make sure all your electrical outlets work.



6. LOCK UP YOUR VALUABLES!

Personal items such as medications, jewelry, valuables and firearms should be removed from the home or locked in a safe for your protection. This is an important step that I share with all of my clients.