



How to Stage Your Home to Make It Sell

Make your home more inviting to potential buyers with home staging. The techniques are inexpensive and effective, and can put your house ahead of the rest on the block.

Competition can be fierce in the real estate market, so it's important to sell quickly and for top dollar. But as tempting as it might be to rush your property onto the market, research shows that it pays to take the time to employ simple staging techniques to help it stand out from the pack¹. In fact, a 2015 survey conducted by the National Association of Realtors found that 49 percent of Realtors surveyed believe that buyers are usually affected by staging¹.

Many staging efforts are low-to-no-cost in nature and can make all the difference in how would-be buyers see your home. But you don't have to completely renovate and redecorate to make the space look appealing. Here are several things you should, and shouldn't, do when it comes to home staging.

DO

- 1** Ask for unbiased advice. You might be blind to what others see since you're there day in and day out. Invite a trusted friend or family member to go through your home and list ways the property can be more appealing to potential buyers.
- 2** De-clutter, de-personalize, and secure your valuables like jewelry and laptop computers. This also means packing away your personal mementos and family photos, and staging open spaces with neutral, attractive artwork. Removing knickknacks, junk, toys, and large furniture will make living areas and closets feel larger and cleaner

Pro Tip: Rent a storage unit to keep those items you don't want to get rid of but are taking up space while your home is for sale. Storage units are inexpensive and can help make areas like your garage and basement look roomier.

DON'T

- 1** Be insulted by their suggestions. To appeal to more buyers, your friend might suggest changes that neutralize your home so others can easily envision themselves there. Your real estate agent will also be able to provide helpful input into what buyers want.
- 2** Overlook something like a dirty carpet. It's an immediate turnoff to potential buyers, so it's wise to have it professionally cleaned.
- 3** Let pets and their odors put off potential buyers. Minimize their presence by meticulously cleaning crates, litter boxes, and your yard. When possible, arrange to have them out of the house during showings.

- 3 A top-to-bottom clean of your property until it can pass a white glove test. Although you can do this yourself, professional cleaners typically have the equipment and expert know-how to thoroughly scrub every major surface, making their services a good investment.
 - 4 Spruce up your home's exterior with nicely trimmed shrubbery, a well-maintained yard, and attractive outdoor furnishings. Plant low-maintenance flowers for a pop of color, or just put out hanging baskets if gardening isn't your thing.
 - 5 Make sense of good scents. Numerous studies have shown that people spend more money if the area in which they're shopping/spending has a pleasant, ambient aroma². Infuse your home with light scents like citrus, vanilla, or pine. Reed diffusers, oil plug-ins, or potpourri are few safe and effective options, as are bouquets of fresh flowers.
 - 6 Stage vignettes to help buyers visualize your home's potential. Set up a cozy reading or game-playing nook, or equip your kitchen with all the ingredients for a family favorite like s'mores. Set your dining room table for showings so the room looks inviting.
- 4 Let your home languish on the market. Find out some do's and don'ts of home staging that will get your home sold fast.
 - 5 Forget the small touches. Invest in a few staples that you can take to your new abode, like crisp, white bed linens, flameless candles, and luxurious bathroom towels and accessories.
 - 6 Hide your hard work with a dark house. Open the blinds to let in natural light and turn on lights throughout so the entire space feels inviting.

Finally, consider hiring a professional stager if your budget permits. It could be well worth the investment, as 95 percent of professionally staged homes sell for 17 percent more than non-staged homes, on average. Pricing varies by region, but staging generally costs between \$500 to \$600 per room, per month, with an initial consultancy fee up front³.

¹ <https://www.nar.realtor/news-releases/2015/01/home-staging-can-help-sell-home-for-more-realtors-say>

² <https://realestate.usnews.com/real-estate/articles/5-scents-that-make-sense-when-selling-a-home>

³ <https://www.realtor.com/advice/sell/how-much-does-home-staging-cost>