

The Whole



PREPARING
TO SELL:
CHECKLIST

brandow
group

RE/MAX
ESCAPMENT
REALTY INC., BROKERAGE
INDEPENDENTLY OWNED & OPERATED

No matter what your circumstances, selling a house always involves a bit of work. Preparing it for showings usually requires a thorough cleanup and often means investing a few dollars to do some repairs or spruce the place up a bit. You do not have to do everything for your house to sell. (Frankly, in a fast-moving market, all but the most problematic or overpriced houses sell.) The more of these items that you can do, though, the more you improve your chances of getting higher offers, fast. Use this checklist to guide your home prep. And if you need a sounding board to help you decide which items you can skip, [we are here](#) to listen and discuss it with you!

DECLUTTER

Go through each room and pack/store/get rid of anything that will not be used before the big move. Clear surfaces of things you do need by putting them out of sight. This includes items like:

- Off-season or unused clothing/toys/equipment
- Picture frames
- Personalized décor (family pictures, religious items, mementoes)
- Accessories
- Files/books/magazines
- Knick-knacks
- Displayed collections
- Pet supplies
- Personal care items
- Bulky and/or mismatched furniture
- Thin out and tidy up items in closets, including linen closet

Find some tips [here](#) for major decluttering projects.

REPAIR

There is an important distinction between repairs and renovations. When you have decided to sell your own home, it is often not worth renovating. In many cases, putting in a new kitchen or bathroom will not result in a net profit to you. Read more about ROI on renovations [here](#).

However, repairing existing items and finishing half-done projects is almost always worth the time. It shows that the place has been well cared-for and inspires confidence in buyers that they can trust that the house is solid. If you don't have time or the skills to do these repairs yourself, consider calling in a handyman. (Or a qualified tradesperson for things like electrical and plumbing, etc.) Here are some things that often require small repairs:

Every Room

- Ensure that light fixtures, switches, and outlets work; replace burnt bulbs
- Replace broken door hardware; adjust or oil sticky hinges
- Check that windows are on their tracks, and that they open, close, and lock properly
- Replace broken glass panes
- Scrape and repair flaking paint
- Repair small holes and cracks in ceilings and walls; touch up paint
- Repair broken flooring to the best of your ability; shampoo carpets
- Install new switch plate covers on outlets and light switches as needed
- Fresh, neutral-coloured paint on walls, doors and trims (if painting isn't an option, try a Magic Eraser to wash off scuffs)

Kitchen/Baths

- Recaulk around all fixtures as needed and fill in missing grout
- Repair/replace leaky faucets, valves, or pipes
- Tighten or replace broken or loose cabinet doorknobs
- Install a clean, new showerhead
- Consider replacing or reglazing chipped or damaged sinks and bathtubs
- If needed, consider painting cabinets
- Replace hazy mirrors and old shower curtains
- Install a new toilet seat
- Repair/replace loose or broken door knobs and hinges

Other Spaces

- Tighten loose handrails; install where missing
- Inspect, clean, and repair fireplace and chimney as needed
- Inspect, clean, and repair furnace and A/C as needed
- Patch roof leaks
- Ensure eaves troughs are extended far enough away from the house
- Secure any loose stairs or steps.
- Fill foundation cracks
- Adjust garage door openers as needed

CLEAN

No matter how much of a clean freak you are on a daily basis, the cleaning you do before listing your home for sale is different. (And if it isn't, you likely have a superpower that makes the rest of us jealous!) A sparkling clean home, even one that is outdated, greatly appeals to buyers. They will pay more for a house they perceive to have been well maintained. Don't feel that you must do all the cleaning yourself. This is a big job, and hiring an extra pair of hands can speed up the process and save some energy for things no one can do for you! There is a little overlap between cleaning and repairing. Since a coat of paint instantly gives a clean feel, some paint touch ups are included here! Start with the exterior and move on in:

Exterior

- Clean up and store toys, bikes, pool equipment, and outdoor gadgets
- Thoroughly clean up after pets
- Clean up and weed gardens
- Rake up leaves
- Trim overgrowth of bushes and trees
- Clean and seal decks and driveways
- Pressure wash decks/patios/siding/concrete walkways
- Clean gutters
- Wash windows
- If necessary, paint the front door to cover scuffs or fading
- Clean up railings, either by wiping down or adding a fresh coat of paint
- Clean light fixtures

Interior

Every Room

- Remove dust and cobwebs from ceiling to floor
- Vacuum/wipe down vents and vent covers
- Wipe baseboards
- Clean windows and sills
- Wash light fixtures and ceiling fans
- Dust blinds/wash curtains
- Wash and polish floors
- Deal with any odours due to pets, cooking, or smoking
- Remove any scented items: candles, potpourri, air fresheners, etc. (Open windows to air out instead)

Kitchen/Baths

- Thoroughly clean appliances
- Scrub all surfaces: Sinks, countertops, faucets, backsplashes, floors
- Pull out fridge and stove and clean behind them
- Unblock drains
- Descale porcelain fixtures

Other Spaces

- Unfinished spaces (garages, basements, laundry areas) should be decluttered, tidied, and broom swept

ADD FINISHING TOUCHES

You have some choices when it comes to final decorating choices to present your home on the open market. Stagers are skilled professionals who know how to maximize the appeal of a space with colour, texture, placement, and an eye for design. You can choose to let the stager loose in the house and totally re-decorate.

If you don't need the whole service, which is the case with many sellers who will continue to live in the house while it is for sale, there is another option. Most stagers will do a consultation with you (ours sends the bill to us for this service, so you don't pay for it). During this meeting, he or she will suggest ways of using your own belongings to enhance the beauty of your home. You may get some recommendations to add a few pieces here and there as well. Their fresh eyes on the home you've known for many years could be just the inspiration you need. Or you can use your own creative flair to decorate to your taste and put your own finishing touches on the place. Whatever you decide, there are some basics that you may find helpful. Here they are:

- Plant simple, colourful flowers in the front flower bed
- Install easy-to-see address numbers at the front
- Add a new mat at the front door
- Remove fussy window treatments and replace with simple blinds or curtains that allow lots of light in
- Keep most colours neutral on furniture and walls, with little pops of brighter colour in accessories only
- Display a simple, well-placed vase of flowers in the house
- Carefully arrange furniture to allow a free walking path through the different spaces in the house
- Hang fluffy, matching towels in the bathroom
- Consider adding new bedding and a few throw pillows, at least in the largest bedroom