SELLER GUIDE

Getting Your Home Ready to Sell

What to fix, what to skip, and how to make your home show its best.

Lisa Finks • Lourdes Arencibia • Carolyn Duris

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Start Smart

Before you paint every room or start a long to-do list, step back. The goal is not to make your home perfect. The goal is to make smart improvements that help buyers notice the best parts of the home, understand the spaces easily, and feel confident the property has been well cared for.

By the Numbers

83%

of buyers' agents said staging made it easier for buyers to visualize a property as their future home.

49%

of sellers' agents observed that staging reduced time on market.

29%

of agents reported that staging led to offers as much as 10% higher.

Source: National Association of REALTORS®, 2025 Profile of Home Staging.



Start Here

1. Fix deferred maintenance before considering cosmetic projects.
2. Focus on first impressions, light, and room function.
3. Edit, simplify, and clean before spending big.

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Curb Appeal & Entry

First impressions start before buyers ring the bell.



Curb Appeal

- Trim landscaping and clear leaves, debris, and cobwebs
- Clean exterior surfaces, windows, walkways, and the front door
- Repair obvious wear like peeling paint, loose railings, tired hardware, or damaged screens
- Check exterior lighting and make sure house numbers are easy to see
- Keep porch décor simple and seasonal

Quick Walk-Up Test

1. Would a buyer notice maintenance first?
2. Does the front door feel intentional and cared for?
3. Does the entry feel open, bright, and calm?



Entry / Foyer

- Clear extra coats, shoes, bags, and everyday overflow
- Clean floors, glass, mirrors, and door hardware
- Make sure lighting is warm, bright, and fully functioning
- Add one simple styling element if the space needs warmth
- Avoid heavy fragrance; clean and neutral is the goal

Living Spaces That Show Well

Buyers respond to rooms that feel bright, balanced, and easy to understand.





Family Room

- Show comfort without clutter
- Simplify open shelving and media areas
- Add soft texture, light, and a few intentional accents



Dining Area

- Make the purpose of the room obvious
- Use a simple centerpiece and clean lines
- Let buyers see how the room fits everyday life and entertaining



Flex Space

- Give every extra room a clear purpose
- A small office, reading nook, or workout space can be more compelling than an empty room
- Avoid overfurnishing

What Buyers Need to Feel

- Space
- Light
- Function



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Kitchen & Baths

These rooms matter, but they do not always need a full renovation.



Kitchen

1. Clear counters except for a few attractive essentials
2. Deep clean appliances, backsplash, sink, and cabinet fronts
3. Replace burnt-out bulbs and improve lighting
4. Edit refrigerator clutter and oversized countertop items
5. Minor updates like paint, hardware, or fixtures can go a long way



Baths

1. Make them spotless, bright, and fresh
2. Use fresh white or neutral towels, bath mats, and shower curtains if needed
3. Clear counters and simplify open storage
4. Re-caulk, touch up paint, and fix minor plumbing issues
5. Add one small, clean styling moment such as greenery or a tray

Where Sellers Often Overspend

1. Full remodels right before listing
2. Highly personal finishes
3. Ignoring easy cosmetic fixes while planning major projects

Clean, updated, and well-maintained usually beats newly renovated but mismatched.

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Bedrooms, Closets & Storage

These spaces should feel restful, spacious, and easy for buyers to imagine as their own.



Primary Bedroom

- Use calm bedding, limited décor, and open surfaces
- Remove extra furniture that makes the room feel tight
- Let light and scale do the work

Secondary Bedrooms

- Keep the purpose of the room easy to read
- Simplify children's rooms and highly personalized décor
- Show flexibility for guests, kids, or work-from-home needs



Closets & Storage

- Edit aggressively so storage feels generous
- Use matching or simple hangers where possible
- Clear floors and contain small items
- A tidy linen closet, pantry, or mudroom helps the whole home feel more organized

The Goal

Buyers should think: there is room for my life here.

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The Details That Change Everything

Often, the biggest improvement comes from smaller, smarter decisions.



Paint

- Fresh paint can be one of the highest-impact updates
- Favor light, warm, neutral tones



Lighting

- Replace burnt-out bulbs
- Use warm, consistent light throughout the home
- Update dated fixtures when the change is simple and worthwhile



Windows

- Clean glass thoroughly
- Simplify heavy or overly specific window treatments
- Let natural light in



Hardware & Finishes

- Tighten handles, knobs, and hinges
- Replace visibly tired or mismatched hardware
- Touch up scuffs, chipped paint, and small cracks



Clutter

- Clear surfaces so buyers see space, not stuff
- Remove highly personal items and too many decorative layers

Before You Spend

If a change will not improve light, condition, function, or first impression, think twice before investing in it.

RIGHT IMPROVEMENTS GREATER RESULTS

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Photo Day + Showing Day

The final polish can make the home feel calm, bright, and ready.



Photo Day

- [ ] Turn on lights and open window coverings
- [ ] Clear counters, nightstands, desks, and bathroom surfaces
- [ ] Hide cords, pet items, and small trash bins
- [ ] Straighten rugs, bedding, and dining chairs
- [ ] Remove vehicles from the driveway when possible

Showing Day

- [ ] Do a 15-minute reset before leaving
- [ ] Take out trash and hide laundry
- [ ] Secure valuables, medications, and sensitive documents
- [ ] Leave pets with a sitter or out of the home if possible
- [ ] Keep the home lightly styled, quiet, and easy to move through

Need help deciding what to fix first?

A pre-listing walkthrough can help you focus on the updates that are most likely to matter.

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