

# Urban Utah's top tips to get your home ready to sell

*Just the thought of having to pack up and move all your stuff is overwhelming, let alone the thought of everything else you'll want to repair and clean before putting your home on the market. Oh, where to begin?! We've done this before so make it easy on yourself, take our advice and use our guide to help you prepare and stay organized through the process.*



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## 1. Disassociate Yourself With Your Home

Say to yourself, "This is not my home it is a house." Begin to think of it as a product instead of something personal.

Make the mental decision to "let go" of your emotions and focus on the fact that soon this house will no longer be yours.

Picture yourself handing over the keys and envelopes containing appliance warranties to the new owners.

Say goodbye to every room. Thank the house for the security and good times you had there. Don't look backwards -- look toward the future.

If you're spiritual, literally walk through your home and say 'goodbye and thank you'.

Watch a few Marie Kondo episodes on Netflix ('Tidying Up with Marie Kondo' or '10 Amazing Tips from Tidying Up with Markie Kondo') to understand what people are talking about in organizing personal spaces and decluttering your home.

If what you do to get ready to sell still doesn't feel right, if there's something about your arranging that is slightly askew, but you can't put your finger on it, call Jennie Richau at Urban Utah Homes & Estates. She's not just a REALTOR but a Certified Feng Shui Practitioner. Simply moving a piece of furniture can change the entire feel of a room, which can magically make your heart sing or feel harmonious to potential buyers.

## 2. De-Personalize

Pack up those personal photographs and family heirlooms, buyers can't see past personal artifacts. You want buyers to imagine their own photos on the walls, not be distracted by yours. You want buyers to say, "I can see myself living here."

Clean off dresser tops, refrigerators and remove walls of photos. Take down religious pictures, icons or photos too. Your religion is special and personal to you.

Make the space neutral and as much like a hotel suite as possible. We like to say...make the place look like an inviting hotel suite!

## 3. De-Clutter

People collect an amazing quantity of junk. Consider this: if you haven't used it in over a year, you probably don't need it. Rent a POD and get 50% of what's in the home out to storage. Yes, 50%! Think of this process as a head-start on the packing you will eventually need to do anyway. If you don't need it, why not sell it, donate it or throw it away?

Pack up knickknacks and collections. The 'Star Wars Return of the Jedi' collection does not sell a home. Remove most books from bookcases.

Organize liquor cabinets or remove the liquor altogether.

Too many religious icons in the house may make buyers uncomfortable, best to remove all of them, as your religion is special and personal to you, maybe not to your buyers. This is the same with highly intimate photos of yourself - not for public eye.

Clean off everything on kitchen and bathroom counters. Only one or two items should be on the counter, arranged neatly. Refrigerator must be cleaned up and cleaned out.

Pack up out of season clothes and sporting goods. Skis and ski boots aren't appropriate by the back door in the summer.

Clean the darned garage and try and remove stains on the concrete under your cars in the driveway and in the carport/garage areas.

Take out half of what you have in closets. Older homes have small closets anyway so make them look better by removing extraneous items.

## **4. Rearrange Bedroom Closets And Kitchen Cabinets**

Buyers snoop and will open closet and cabinet doors. Think of the message it sends if items fall out! Now imagine what a buyer believes about you if they see everything organized. It says you probably take good care of the rest of the house as well. Organizing means:

Alphabetize spice jars if you have a lot of them. Organize food pantries and cabinets. You don't need all those extra pots and appliances, they are just clutter to buyers.

Neatly stack dishes. If you have too many, store the rest or give them to a worthy cause.

Turn coffee cup handles facing the same way. It's the little subliminal things that make an impression.

Clean your refrigerator, sink, inside of your oven and declutter the kitchen cabinets and drawers, because buyers are looking in them. They WILL open your drawers and cabinets.

Odd, but if you have a small rug on the floor by your kitchen sink, get rid of it. This simple rug tends to stop the eye and break up space so if you take it out you will make your kitchen look better and bigger.

Hang shirts together, buttoned and facing the same direction. Arrange by color.

Line up shoes and pack away the ones you won't be using this season.

These suggestions might be a bit 'OCD' to some, but it's the subliminal sometimes and not the obvious that wins a buyers heart.

Clear closets of unnecessary clutter and organize to maximize the amount of open storage space you are showing off to potential buyers. Use boxes stacked together to hold and hide the clutter. Using matching hangers for clothes-hangers are inexpensive, so splurging on higher quality hangers to replace free wire hangers from the dry cleaners will modernize your closets with visual impact and a more luxurious feel.

## **5. Remove/Replace Favorite Items.**

If you want to take window coverings, chandeliers, built-in appliances or fixtures with you, remove them now if possible. If a buyer never sees it, they won't want it. Once you tell a buyer they can't have an item, they will covet it, and it could blow your deal. Pack those items and replace them, if necessary.

## 6. Rent A Storage Unit or POD

Almost every home shows better with less furniture. Remove pieces of furniture that block or hamper paths and walkways and put them in storage. Since your bookcases are now empty, store them. Remove extra leaves from your dining room table to make the room appear larger. Leave just enough furniture in each room to showcase the room's purpose and plenty of room to move around. You don't want buyers scratching their heads and saying, "What is this room used for?" Less is more in most cases.

## 7. Make Minor Repairs.

Even have a home inspector 'pre-inspect' your home in advance. Giving a buyer a pre-inspection report makes them feel more secure about their purchase and that you've cared enough to do this in advance and address the little things that might be amiss. Your agent can help you find good vendors that won't charge you an arm and a leg!

Fix all the little stuff: Replace cracked floor or counter tiles, patch holes in walls, leaky faucets.

Fix doors that don't close properly and kitchen drawers that jam. Updating old drawer handles, dated light fixtures and door handles is pretty inexpensive and is a subtle upgrade that adds to the overall impression.

Consider painting your walls neutral colors, especially if you have grown accustomed to purple or pink walls. Don't give buyers any reason to remember your home as "the house with the orange bathroom."

Replace burned-out light bulbs inside and out of the home. Some showings are at night!

If you've considered replacing a worn bedspread, do so now. Match pillow coverings to the spread. If the room is too plain, add a few colored accent pillows.

If you want, get your own home inspection-we can recommend many inspectors. Might as well find out if there are any deal breakers in your mechanical systems before you go to market, go under contract and then lose a buyer. Have your sewer line scoped-the most expensive repair you can never imagine. Buyers will not only have a home inspector come through your home, they may also have it tested for Meth and Radon. You can have all the buyers tests done in advance of marketing your home so that you make the purchase painless for the new buyer.

## **8. Now Make That House Sparkle!**

Wash windows inside and out.

Rent a pressure washer and spray down steps and exterior.

Clean out cobwebs. They lurk around water heaters and furnace rooms. Wipe off your water heater and furnace.

Re-caulk tubs, showers and sinks. If you don't know how, get a professional as bad caulking looks terrible. Old bathtubs may have stains. Try a pumice stone-it works beautifully on tub surfaces.

Polish chrome faucets and mirrors. If that vanity in the bathroom is dated, they are really inexpensive to replace.

Clean out the refrigerator and freezer.

Vacuum often and wax up those floors to a shine.

Dust furniture, ceiling fan blades and light fixtures. Buyers often look at 'eye level' so make the front door, entry, screen, lights and house numbers shine.

Bleach dingy grout.

Replace worn rugs. Put out a new welcome mat.

Hang up fresh towels and keep towels in the bathroom to a minimum.

Clean and air out any musty smelling areas. Odors are a no-no. Masking odors is worse. There are not enough scented candles to hide pet urine.

## **9. Scrutinize.**

Go outside and open your front door. Stand there. Do you want to go inside? Does the house welcome you?

Linger in the doorway of every single room and imagine how your house will look to a buyer.

Examine carefully how furniture is arranged and move pieces around until it makes sense. Feng Shui works!

Make sure window coverings hang level, are clean and if slats in blinds are broken, fix them.

Tune in to the room's statement and its emotional pull. Does it have impact and pizzazz? Is it too cluttered or personalized?

Does it look like nobody lives in this house? You're almost finished! Think how a hotel room looks when you check in: clean and sparse.

Stage it. If you can't stage a home, we can help you do it or hire a crew to have it done for you. Professional staging can help sell a home faster and for more money-but it costs money to do it right.

## **10. Last But Not Least, Check Curb Appeal.**

If a buyer won't get out of their agent's car because they don't like the exterior of your home, you'll never get them inside. There are 'signs' that pros look for when home hunting...are your home numbers hanging from a few screws or missing completely? Updated actual metal numbers will show that you care and a clue that you might have an attention to detail that buyers are looking for.

Keep the porches and patios cleared to just the basics. Clean the furniture and the grill.

Mow the lawn regularly, feed it and weed it.

Paint faded or peeling window trim. FHA/VA buyers will have appraisals/lenders that won't allow any peeling exterior paint on the outside of the home.

Plant yellow flowers for the summer or group flower pots together of a few colors. Yellow evokes a buying emotion. Marigolds are inexpensive! Sometimes even decent silk flowers in the right pots in the right places can add color and really not look too crappy.

Trim your bushes and your trees. Haul away debris from behind your garage or shed. Oh, and speaking of garages and sheds - what does the roofing material look like? Old? Need replacing? Does the trim need painting?

Don't forget to put in a new shiny mailbox or repaint the old one.