

QUICK TIPS FOR LAST-MINUTE SHOWINGS

Your house is on the market and your agent just called with great news. Buyers are interested in seeing your home. The not-so-great news? They want to come in less than half an hour and your house is a mess. Don't miss out on a chance to sell your home. Use this quick and easy checklist to prepare.

OUTSIDE. A great first impression starts before a potential buyer opens your front door, so it's important to tidy the outside of your home before a showing.

- Quickly sweep the porch and use the broom to remove any cobwebs.
- Shake off the doormat.
- If your front door has a window, clean the glass.

INSIDE YOUR HOME. Move systematically from room to room, completing these basic tasks to make your home look its best. Enlist family members' help.

- Turn on all lights, put up shades, and open blinds and curtains.
- Pick up clutter and hide it. Tip: A plastic storage tote or laundry basket works well for this job.
- Vacuum or dust-mop high-traffic areas.
- Light mildly fragrant candles; vanilla is subtle and is universally appealing. Make sure you extinguish the candle before departing.
- Close all closet doors.

PETS. Eliminating evidence of pets is a must since they are potential turn-offs.

- If possible, remove pets from the home. At the very least, make sure they are secured.
- Stash pet items, such as beds and toys, out of sight.
- Move litter boxes out of the house.

MAIN LIVING AREAS. Living and family rooms make a big impression on potential buyers. Make sure yours are clean and clutter free.

- Tidy up pillows and seat cushions.
- Stash remotes and other electronics.
- If time permits, straighten accent items and books.

KITCHEN. For a kitchen to wow buyers, it needs to sparkle and smell good. Put dirty dishes in the dishwasher.

- Wipe counters, sink, and appliances with a disposable multi-surface wipe.
- Empty the trash and put in a new trash bag.
- Toss some cut-up citrus and ice cubes into the garbage disposal and run it to eliminate sink odors.

BEDROOMS. Buyers expect bedrooms to be tidy, but generally don't spend as much time looking at them as other living spaces.

- Make the beds.
- Pick up any laundry and store it out of sight.
- Straighten items on nightstands.
- If you have time, wipe horizontal surfaces to remove visible dust. Tip: An inside-out sock works well for this. Just toss it in the laundry when you're done.

BATHROOMS. These spaces can get dirty with everyday use. Follow these steps to make them shine.

- Give toilets a quick scrub with a brush and toilet cleaner.
- Wipe off counters, sinks, and hardware using a disposable wipe or damp towel.
- Use the same towel to quickly clean the floor, if needed.
- Set out new towels, washcloths, soaps, and toilet paper rolls.
- Empty the trash.

