

# 20 STEP CHECKLIST

## TO PREPARE YOUR HOME

### FOR REAL ESTATE PHOTOS



#### INTERIOR

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**1** Clear & Clean Kitchen Counters
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**2** Clear & Clean Bathroom Sinks, Tubs, and Showers
- 

**3** Replace Burned Out Lightbulbs
- 

**4** Turn On All the Lights Throughout the Entire
- 

**5** Open All Window Treatments
- 

**6** Remove Unnecessary Furniture & Decor
- 

**7** Remove Floor Mats and Runners
- 

**8** Turn All Ceiling Fans, TVs, and Computer
- 

**9** Clear Appliances of Magnets and Clutter
- 

**10** Make All of the Beds
- 

**11** Remove All Personal Photos and Items
- 

**12** Put All Shoes & Jackets in Closets
- 

**13** Clear All Night Stands and
- 

**14** Remove All Pet Items

#### EXTERIOR

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**15** Tidy Up the Yard & Landscaping
- 

**16** Sweep Porches/Decks
- 

**17** Clear All Cars from Road & Driveway
- 

**18** Hide All Garbage Cans & Lawn Equipment
- 

**19** Remove Bar-B-Que Covers
- 

**20** Open Up Patio Umbrellas

# INTERIOR



## Clear & Clean Kitchen Counters & Sink

When the kitchen counters are completely cleared off, it makes the kitchen look more prominent, and buyers can imagine how they might use the space. Coffee makers, mixers, and decorations only distract buyers and often make the kitchen feel cluttered.

Remove everything but perhaps a few decorative items from the countertops and clean all surface areas, including the appliances, kitchen sink, and backsplash.

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## Clear & Clean Bathroom Sinks, Tubs, and Showers

Place all of the shampoo bottles, soaps, shaving razors, and other items into a bin that can fit underneath the bathroom sink. This step will help your bathroom look bigger. **CLOSE YOUR TOILET's LID**

Take all items off of the bathroom counter. You want the bathrooms to appear vacant. Clean, neatly folded towels on towel racks are acceptable.

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## Replace Burned Out Light Bulbs

This step is one of the most overlooked items on the list. Be sure to check all of the ceiling lights, as well as extra lamps and exterior lights, to make sure that they all work.

If there are dark areas in the homes, such as a basement, add a few **extra lamps** to brighten them up. Floor lamps that provide up-lighting are great! The more light, the better!

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## Turn On All Lights Throughout The Entire House

Lighting is one of the most important aspects of photography. It's essential to have as much light as possible.

Turn on all of the lights in the house, including lamps and exterior lights. Your photographer will be happy to find your home in its brightest light when they arrive.

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## Open All Window Treatments

Natural light from windows brings life and emotion into real estate photos. We recommend opening all of the window treatments throughout the entire house to let in as much light as possible.

If it's too bright outside, your photographer will alter your shades and curtains to balance the shot. Don't forget to clean the windows!

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## **Remove Unnecessary Furniture & Decorations**

This is probably the most difficult request for sellers, but it's one of the most important items on the list. Removing and storing excess or large bulky furniture can be challenging, but it opens up the floor space and makes the home look much more extensive.

It's wise to consult a professional stager to determine which items should stay or go. This is truly one of those situations where "less is more."

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## Remove Floor Mats and Runners

Floor mats and runners are great at protecting your floors, but they can make the overall floor space look smaller, making the room look smaller. We recommend getting rid of as many floor mats as possible. Photographers use a wide-angle lens that makes rooms look larger. Floor mats tend to get skewed with this effect.

Make sure to roll up and remove all of the floor mats in the bathrooms, kitchen, and laundry areas. If you have any rugs, consult a stager to determine whether or not they should stay.

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## **Turn All Ceiling Fans, TVs, and Computer Screens Off**

Most photographers use HDR photography, which takes multiple light exposures for each photo and combines them into one final shot. Any moving items like ceiling fans or active TV/Computer screens look very strange in HDR. For this reason, we recommend turning off anything that moves or causes motion blur. This is a pro photography tip.

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## **Clear Appliance Surfaces of Magnets and Clutter**

It's common to keep magnets, notes, reminders, and other personal information on the refrigerator. This kind of clutter can be distracting for buyers, so de-clutter these areas.

We ask our sellers to remove all magnets, calendars, and personal items from the refrigerator. It will not only make your home appear tidier, but it also keeps your personal info safe from the general public.

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## Make All of the Beds

This is an obvious one that surprisingly gets overlooked often, especially in the secondary bedrooms. Be sure to make and decorate all the beds with matching sheets, blankets, and pillows. Use bedding that covers the entire bed and fits the mattress correctly.

Use decorative pillows to brighten up the bed, if possible. If a room is clean, and the bed isn't made right, it makes the whole room seem off.

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## Remove All Personal Photos and Items

It's hard for buyers to visualize themselves in your house if your personal items are everywhere. Buyers want to believe that the home was made especially for them.

Since you want your buyers to focus on the house and not on you, you'll need to remove all private photos and articles from the entire home—including patios, porches, and garages.

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## Put All Shoes & Jackets in Closets

When buyers see shoes and jackets on coat racks and entryway floors, they subconsciously assume that the home lacks storage space. This perception is easily fixed by storing these items away.

It's best to remove all jackets and shoes from anywhere they be can see throughout the house. Store away any loose items to remove all distractions.

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## Clear All Night Stands and Dressers

Nightstands tend to accumulate items naturally. Half-read books, prescription bottles, tissues, and electronic devices will quickly clutter these areas.

Remove everything but a lamp and one decorative thing, such as a small floral arrangement or decorative book, to make the space look clean and presentable. Think of a freshly cleaned hotel room.

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## Remove ALL Pet Items

Not everyone has pets. In fact, some people are severely allergic to animals. It's essential to make sure that your house shows no signs of pets, especially pet smells. Please spend some time getting this part right. It is one of the most significant factors in **price reductions** and negative feedback from home buyers.

Consider that you could be "nose blind" to the smell, as you live in your home every day. Ask a neutral party for their honest opinion before listing.

# EXTERIOR



## Tidy Up the Yard & Landscaping

First impressions are crucial, so make sure that the front yard is cleaned up. All of the landscaping needs to be trimmed back and tidy.

The first picture that people will see of your home will be the outside front yard shot. This photo needs to be presented in its very best condition to grab the buyer's attention immediately.

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## **Sweep up the Porch/Patio/Deck**

This step is imperative in the Fall when leaves accumulate daily. Ensure that the entire front and back porches are swept clean, and remove any items you can live without.

If possible, stage these areas with flowers and decorative items to create a relaxing space that invites homebuyers in. Creating an inviting entrance conveys pride-of-ownership to homebuyers.

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## Clear All Cars from Road & Driveway

It's never good to have cars in the driveway during real estate photos. Always remove all cars, trucks, RVs, and trailers from the house's driveway and front.

Pro tip: Ask your neighbors to move their cars from the road to make the street look quiet and inviting in your photos. This is especially important for drone shots.

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## Hide All Garbage Cans & Lawn Equipment

Large garbage cans and unsightly lawn equipment can be very distracting in real estate photos. Put all of the trash cans in the garage, along with garden hoses, lawnmowers, and other yard maintenance tools.

Keep the lawn free and clear of any small toys and pet items as well. You don't want the photographer to have to do this step. It will distract them.

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## Remove Outdoor Cooker Covers

It's time to show off that fantastic bar-b-que grill, not hide it! Smoker and grill covers should be removed so that cookers are exposed and ready for use.

If it's an old grill that needs to be covered because it's rusty and unsightly, it's better to remove or throw it out completely.

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## Open Up Patio

### Umbrellas

If it's not too windy during your photoshoot, be sure to open up any patio umbrellas to stage the area. Dust off chairs and set up the site as though you will enjoy it with friends later.

Fresh outdoor pillows and flowers will create an inviting space for your photographer to highlight while they're in your backyard.