

Open House ✓ Checklist

Courtesy of www.housedeclutter.com

How to prepare your house for sale

Homebuyers on the hunt want the right house in the right neighbourhood, but they are also looking for something less tangible: They want to trade their old life for something better.

They can imagine themselves entertaining their new neighbours in a spacious designer living room. And in the morning, leisurely reading the Sunday papers over french toast as sunshine bathes their stylish — and immaculate — kitchen in a warm, cozy glow. All this while the children are quietly playing with their toys upstairs.

In their dreams, the buyer's new life features a gorgeous home that is an oasis of beauty, calm and serenity — and the envy of all their frazzled, messy, decor-challenged friends.

Ahh! Aren't dreams grand?

For home sellers, the dreams of prospective buyers can become their worst nightmare. But with some planning, organization, hard work and a "spruce up" budget equal to about 1% of their asking price, sellers can give buyers what they expect to see the minute they walk in the door — a home where dreams *do* come true.

What's in it for sellers?

- ✓ A quick, stress-free sale
- ✓ Higher selling price
- ✓ More home equity available as downpayments on their own dreams.

This ✓**CHECKLIST** is designed to assist home sellers in preparing their property for sale. For the quickest sale at the best price, all major cleaning, decluttering and repairs should be completed *before* photos of the property are taken and the listing placed online. The "optional" items on the list will bring the greatest returns.

✓Kitchen

Must do:

Kitchens, like bathrooms, must be immaculate.

Floors, counters, cabinets, stoves, sinks, faucets and backsplashes that have been **cleaned and scrubbed** of grit, grime and grease are a signal to buyers that it's OK to continue the viewing. If the sink is beyond cleaning, or you cannot bring back its shine, replace it.

Must do:

Remove clutter from countertops to give the appearance of more space; thin out and **tidy up food cupboards** for same reason.

Must do:

If kitchen walls have not been painted in 4 years or more, **freshen**

up with a coat of paint. Neutral is best.

Must do:

Remove outdated wallpaper (think pickle jars) and borders and replace with paint.



Must do:

Repair damaged cabinet doors; **rehang crooked doors.**

Must do:

Replace countertops that are stained, scratched or have burn marks. A neutral laminate is fine.

Must do:

Buy a new dishwasher if the existing built-in does not work.

Optional:

If your kitchen is looking a little dated, **replace the pulls or knobs on your cabinets** with contemporary hardware.

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Optional:

Replace your faucet with a contemporary fixture with a pull-out sprayer.

Optional:

Have a professional **install a modern backsplash**.

Optional:

Spruce up dated cabinets with a coat of paint or new doors.

✓Bathrooms

Must do:

Bathrooms, like kitchens, must be **clean, clean, clean**. That means scrubbing floors, counters, toilets, sinks, bathtubs (and caulking), showers, faucets, tiles (and grout) and mirrors.

Must do:

Remove clutter from countertops, bathtubs and back of toilet to depersonalize and add to sense of cleanliness (no one wants to see the seller's toothbrush, deodorant or wet facecloth).

Must do:

Ensure all **plugs near sources of water** are GFCIs (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters).

Must do:

Remove wall-to-wall carpet and replace with neutral tiles or good-quality linoleum.

Must do:

Replace or repair **cracked floor tiles**.

Must do:

Replace rusted or worn drains in sinks, bathtubs.

Must do:

Replace rusted, or **scratched sinks, bathtubs, toilets**.

Must do:

Replace or repair **leaky toilets, showers, faucets**.

Must do:

Replace old caulking around tubs, showers.

Must do:

Repair or **replace fan** if it doesn't work.

Must do:

Replace light fixture if outdated or sheds little light.

Optional:

Replace vanity if worn or outdated.

✓Family rooms, living rooms, dining rooms

Must do:

Clear clutter (including family photos) from bookshelves, tables, cabinets.

Must do:

Clean or replace stained or **dingy carpeting**.

Must do:

Remove/repair water damage stains from ceiling. Make sure you have found the source of the leak.

Must do:

If walls have not been painted in 4



years or more, **freshen up with a coat of paint**. Neutral is best.

Must do:

Use **sofa covers** if furniture is torn, worn or stained.

Must do:

Remove furniture if buyers can't walk in the room comfortably without banging into something. There should be at least 3 feet of clearance around furniture.

Must do:

Replace **outdated ceiling light fixtures**.

Optional:

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Sand and stain worn or damaged wood floors.

Optional:

Replace or enhance blinds with **drapery panels**. Keep it light and airy.

✓Bedrooms

Must do:

Clear clutter from dressers, night tables, desks, bookshelves.

Must do:

Thin out clothes, shoes etc. from closet to give appearance of more space.

Must do:

Clean or replace stained or dingy **carpeting**.

Optional:

Replace or enhance blinds with **drapery panels**. Keep it light and airy.

Optional:

Replace outdated or worn bedding with contemporary duvets, throws, pillows etc.

✓Basements

Must do:

Plug in a dehumidifier if basement smells musty.

Must do:

Clean or replace **stained carpeting**.

Must do:

Repair and seal visible **cracks in foundation walls**.

Must do:

Arrange storage items into neat piles at one end of basement. Use containers with covers.

Optional:

Replace carpeting with laminate.

Optional:

In unfinished basements, **paint floors or walls** for a fresher look.

✓Attics

Must do:

Sort through storage items and throw out/give away what you no longer need.

Optional:

Replace missing insulation before the home inspector makes a note of it.

✓Garages

Must do:

Clear out junk/clutter to **make room to park a vehicle**.

Must do:

Paint garage door if it's rusted/peeling/scratched.

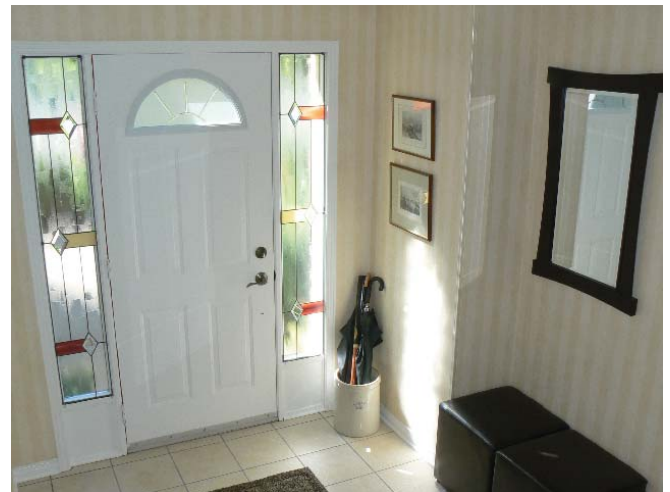
Optional:

Paint garage floor for a cleaner look.

✓Entranceways/walkways

Must do:

Replace loose or **broken pavement** or bricks on walkway.



Must do:

Repair or **replace damaged storm doors**/screens.

Must do:

Paint steel front door if it's weather-beaten or is a blah colour.

Must do:

Repair or replace loose/**broken door handle**.

Must do:

Repair door bell if it doesn't work.

Must do:

Repair or replace **broken steps**.

Must do:

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Paint or replace **tired-looking mailbox**.

Must do:
Replace dirty/**worn outdoor mats**.

Optional:
Replace **outdated lighting fixtures**.

Optional:
Add flower pots/hanging baskets near entranceway.

✓ **Windows**
Must do:
Check windows to make sure they open properly. Fix them if they don't.

Must do:
Remove mould around window frames.

Must do:
Replace damaged/missing caulking around window frames.

Must do:
Replace **cracked glass**.

Must do:
Repair broken seals so you don't bring attention to older windows.

Must do:
Replace torn or **weathered screens**.

Must do:
Wash windows inside and out.

✓ **Façades/trim/gutters**
Must do:
Paint peeling trim, shutters.

Must do:
Repair **cracks in foundation**.

Must do:
Hose down/**power wash** **outside of house**.

Must do:
Clean out **gutters**.

Must do:
Replace broken/**missing eavestroughs**.

Must do:
Position **down spouts** to drain away from foundation.

Optional:
Add shutters, window boxes or canopies to give your house more curb appeal.

✓ **Patio/deck/yard**
Must do:
Replace **rotten boards and railings on deck**.

Must do:
Repair or replace loose or **broken bricks on patio**.

Must do:
Pull weeds from patio, flower beds.



Must do:
Trim hedges and overgrown bushes.

Must do:
Keep grass cut and watered.

Must do:
Keep pool clean and in running order.

Optional:
Replace **outdated patio furniture**.



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