



PREP & STYLING GUIDE

for Real Estate Photography

TOP 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

INSIDE

1. Make sure the home is clean, organized, and decluttered. Remember to tidy up pet items too.
2. Turn on all lights and open blinds. Lighting is key to great photos!
3. Ask homeowners and dogs to leave the residence for the shoot. This ensures people and pets don't end up in the photos.

OUTSIDE

4. Sweep and clean porches and patios, tidy outdoor furniture, and remove BBQ covers. Buyers want to see themselves relaxing here.
5. Remove all cars and trailers from driveway and property. This helps the home shine in exterior photos!

INTERIOR

Make the home sparkle.
Creating a clean and organized
space that potential buyers can
imagine living in is key to a
quick selling process.





CLEAN & TIDY UP

Thoroughly clean the whole house. Vacuum carpets, mop hard floors, wipe down countertops, and shine windows to make the home look, and smell, inviting to buyers. Alternatively, pay for a cleaning company to **reduce stress** and get the home on the market faster!

Put All Shoes and Jackets in Closets

Store items normally seen on coat racks and in entryways elsewhere. Doing so allows buyers to see the **full potential** of the storage space, without the distraction of the current homeowner's personal belongings.

Remove Floor Mats and Runners

Floor mats and runners, often found in kitchens, bathrooms, hallways, and laundry areas, can make the overall floor space seem smaller. Store as many of these as possible to **allow buyers to imagine** their own decor in the home. Consult a stager to determine if large area rugs are a distraction or add to the appeal of the space.

WINDOWS & BLINDS

Open All Window Coverings

Natural light from windows gives real estate photos life and beauty. Open all window coverings throughout the house to ***let in as much light as possible***. If it's too bright outside, your professional photographer knows how to adjust your shades and curtains for perfect lighting. Make sure all ***windows are spotless*** to really show off the view

Window Shutters and Blinds

Horizontal blinds and shutters - Keep horizontal blinds ***down***. Open the blades in a flat position to see the exterior. If you do not want to see outside the window (i.e., it's a close-up view of the side of the neighbor's house) turn the shutter blades up a little.

Vertical blinds - Keep vertical blinds ***fully open***. The most important thing is that any wall with multiple window coverings is adjusted in the same way.





LIGHTING

Turn On Every Light In The House

Lighting is *everything* when it comes to photography. It's important to have as much light as possible for photos to *fully capture the home*. Turn on all ceiling lights, floor lamps, and tabletop lamps in each room. During the evening or less sunny weather, turn on exterior lights too. Your photographer will enjoy coming into a shoot with the lighting already situated.

Replace Burned Out Light Bulbs

This step is easily overlooked, but so important. A burned out bulb is *very noticeable* in photos. Check all ceiling lights, as well as side lamps and exterior lights to make sure every bulb turns on. If there are dark areas in the homes, such as a basement, add a few extra lights to brighten them up.

Pro Tip:

Make sure to use bulbs of the *same temperature* in rooms. Incandescent bulbs in the same space as fluorescent bulbs can cause the lighting to clash in photos.

TURN OFF SCREENS

Turn OFF All TVs and Computer Screens

The best way to make a home look bright and crisp in photos is with **professional HDR photography**. This process takes multiple light exposures for each photo and combines them into one final shot. Any screens with moving images, such as active TV and computer screens, look very strange in HDR.

Turning off computer screens also makes sure private emails and documents don't end up being photographed accidentally.

Avoid these unnatural distractions in your photos by **turning off anything that moves** or causes motion blur such as ceiling fans.





KITCHEN & DINING ROOM

Clear and Clean Kitchen Counters and Sink

Coffee makers, mixers, paper towels, cleaning supplies, and too many decorations are ***distracting to buyers***. Cleared and cleaned counters make the kitchen ***more inviting***, and buyers can more easily imagine themselves in the space.

Clean all surface areas, including the appliances, kitchen sink, and backsplash. Remove everything but a ***few decorative items*** from the countertops. Take out the trash and hide garbage cans in pantry or closet. Clear the sink of dishes by washing and putting away or loading the dishwasher.

Put Away Magnets, Notes, and Pictures

Magnets, notes, reminders, and other personal information on the fridge and around the kitchen are distracting to buyers and ***should be put away***. Removing these items not only helps buyers appreciate the clean space, but also protects your personal information.



BEDROOMS

Make All of the Beds

This is an important step for all bedrooms. Be sure to *make and decorate* all the beds with clean sheets, blankets, and pillows of neutral colors. Use bedding that covers the entire bed and fits the correct mattress size. Use decorative pillows to add a pop of color!

Remove All Personal Photos and Items

Buyers have a hard time seeing themselves in the home if personal belongings are everywhere. Remove all personal photos from the bedroom (and other rooms in the home). It's a great idea to *replace these with universally appealing photos* of nature or simple artwork.

Clear All Nightstands and Dressers

Old books, prescription bottles, tissues, and electronic devices/chargers tend to clutter up the bedroom quickly. *Cut down items* on the nightstands to a lamp and one decoration. A clean and presentable bedroom helps buyers imagine themselves sleeping here.

BATHROOMS

Buyers enjoy the look and feel of a ***spa-like atmosphere***. Clear the bathroom and countertops of all personal items and clutter. Accent neutral colors with a small floral arrangement or decorative soap-dish. Items like toothbrushes, medications, and deodorant should be put away. Remove ***all soaps, razors, and loofahs*** from showers and tubs. Hang up crisp and clean towels. Put toilet seats down and add a fresh roll of toilet paper.

Clear and Clean Bathroom Sinks, Tubs, and Showers

Place all soap bottles, hair care, loofahs, shaving razors, and other items into a bucket that can fit underneath the bathroom sink. This helps the bathroom shine without distractions. Wipe down counters and clean mirrors.

Closet Space

Organize closets by ***folding and hanging clothes***. If you organize by color, the closet will appear more tidy and much bigger.



EXTERIOR

First impressions matter! Let's make sure buyers fall in love with the home the second they arrive.



FRONT YARD

Sweep up the Porch, Patio, and Decks

Make sure all front and back porches are ***swept clean and pressure washed*** to remove moss and dirt. Accent these areas with plants and decorative items to create a relaxing and inviting space. Create an attractive entrance with flowers and small decorations to welcome homebuyers in. Remove empty planters, dead plants, and piles of leaves that can build up outside.

Clear All Cars from Road and Driveway

Having cars in the driveway during a photoshoot is a ***major distraction*** and makes it hard to ***fully capture the exterior*** of the home. Remove all cars, trucks, RVs, and trailers from the house's driveway, front, and sides. Remember to close all garage doors.

Follow Flag Etiquette

If you would like to hang up a flag, please do! To make sure you ***do it properly***, here is a link for the dos and don'ts of flag etiquette.

<https://www.military.com/flag-day/flag-etiquette-dos-and-donts.html>





BACK YARD

Hide All Garbage Cans and Lawn Equipment

Large garbage cans and scattered lawn equipment can be very distracting in real estate photos. To make sure buyers see the yard's ***full potential***, place trash cans in the garage, roll up any garden hoses, store away lawnmowers, and put up all other yard maintenance tools.

Toys and Sports Equipment

Playing in the yard is fun, but toys and pet items in photos makes it hard for buyers to see ***their own family*** making memories here. Clear the lawn of any toys, sports balls, basketball goals, soccer goals, and pet items to make it more inviting.



PATIOS, POOLS & HOT TUBS

Remove Outdoor Cooker Covers

Have an awesome backyard hangout? **Show it off!** Remove smoker and grill covers to help buyers imagine their own cookouts here. If you would rather cover the grill because it's rusty and unattractive, it's **better to remove** it completely.

Open Patio Umbrellas

If weather allows, open patio umbrellas so buyers know there's plenty of room for shady spots. Dust off patio furniture and set it up like you will be having guests later. Clean, colorful outdoor **pillows and flowers** will create an inviting space for your photographer to highlight the backyard. Put out a bottle of wine and a couple of wine glasses to give an impression that this is a **perfect spot to relax** after work.

Pools and Hot Tubs

Remove all debris from pools and hot tubs. Put away the pool vacuum and cleaner hose. Hide any pool cleaning supplies. Remember to **turn on fountains** and water features.

PETS

A few tips for our furry friends.





PETS

Remove ALL Pet Items

Not everyone has pets, and in fact, some people are *highly allergic* to animals. It's essential to make sure that your house **shows no signs** of pets - pet smells especially. Spend plenty of time making sure fur and dander is cleaned, pet items are stored away, and the **house smells fresh**. This is one of the most significant reasons home buyers give negative feedback and ask for price reductions.

Consider that you are used to living in your home and could be "nose blind" to the smell of your pets. Ask someone who **does not live in the home** to do a "smell test" and give their honest opinion before listing.

Place food bowls, water bowls, pet beds, and toys in a pantry or closet. Use a lint roller or vacuum on furniture to remove pet hair. During the shoot, take pets for a walk or place them in a hidden crate. Make sure to **clear the backyard** of unsightly pet waste.

WRAPPING UP

Preparing your house for attractive marketing leads to attractive offers!





LEAVING THE PROPERTY

Make Plans to Leave for a Few Hours

Since we will be capturing the **entire** home, inside and out, it is best to **leave the property**. People, pets, and kids moving around the house during a photoshoot are likely to be caught in important photos. An unoccupied house allows the photographer to work **quickly and distraction free**. They will appreciate the space to provide their most focused, high quality work.

Make plans ahead of time and photoshoot day will be easy! Get the house prepared and put whatever items you need together to take the family (and pets) somewhere else for the day. Sometimes we all need a good reason to get out for a few hours and do something fun! Even if you're the only one in the home, if you stay for a photoshoot, you will be shuffling from room to room to "stay out of the way," It is **most comfortable for everyone**, and ensures the highest quality photos, to exit the property during the shoot.



WEATHER AND TIDES

Be Prepared to Reschedule

Washington is notorious for inclement weather that changes rapidly. Weather affects the overall look of the house, so we do our best to work around the forecast. Rain, wind, and snow can **substantially affect the quality** of the final marketing materials. For instance, making sure views of Mt Rainier and the Olympics are **visible and impressive**. When it comes to aerial photo and video shots, it's impossible to fly drones when it's raining or too windy.

If the weather suddenly changes, **be prepared for the possibility** of your real estate agent calling to reschedule your photoshoot. If our photographer determines that it is best to wait for more ideal conditions, trust their professional expert opinion.

Being flexible will produce the **highest quality marketing materials** for your home.



LOCKING UP

Leave Instructions for the Photographer to Lock Up

When the photographer is finished with the shoot, they will notify the Realtor, or Realtor's assistant, that they are done. Before you leave the property for duration of the photoshoot, make sure to provide a **key and instructions** to let the photographer know your preferred method of locking up.

You may also give these instructions to your Realtor, and they will pass it on to the photographer. We will happily hide a key or use a lockbox to securely store it.



IN SUMMARY

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide! Your home's marketing affects how buyers perceive it, making it the most important step to getting it sold. Truly, the outcome of the marketing materials starts with your preparation. Following this checklist completely is a ***proven way*** to make your home look market-ready before the photographer arrives.

You've likely done a lot of work to get your home ready to sell but keep going! Even the small details matter when you're having photos taken of every feature of a home. Putting in the energy to prepare your home ensures you ***get the most out of the photographer's time and talent***. Just like a jeweler shining a diamond before showcasing it, making your home sparkle will help it stand out from the rest!



ANY QUESTIONS?

Please contact your agent with any questions or concerns you may have.

An aerial photograph of a city street grid with various buildings, including a prominent circular skyscraper on the left. A semi-transparent dark grey overlay covers the center of the image, containing white text.

CONTACT ME:

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