



Ultimate Guide: How to Prepare Your House for Real Estate Photography



Mark Jacobs Productions Inc.

704-230-1033 - mjacobsproductions@icloud.com

Is Your Home Ready?

Getting Ready for the Photographer

Your agent has hired a professional real estate photographer and this is one of the best things that your agent can do to make your real estate listing shine. But, before the photographer arrives, there are a few things that you should do to prepare your home.

First Impressions Matter

The first view that a person will get from the room is when they are standing in the doorway, so keep that perspective in mind when you are arranging the furniture. You want to create a lasting impression from the moment that they walk in the room, and they will likely spend more time viewing the room from the side where the door is located.

From a photo standpoint, the real estate photographer will take photos from the doorway area, and they will also make use of the windows and natural light in the room. So you want to consider the way the furniture is placed as it corresponds with the windows and doorways. It is good to capture the windows in the photos, because people like to see the natural light that comes in the room.

If there are built-in features in the room, such as a fireplace or decorative pillars, the photographer will take the photos from an angle to include those features. So, you can arrange your furniture to be complimentary of the built-in decor.

Less is More

It is always best to clear the clutter out of every room, because a clean space is more appealing. Get rid of anything that is cluttering the room, and when you think you are done... continue working to get rid of a few more items in the room.

The goal is to create a stylish, generic room in which the buyer can picture themselves living in. If you include too many personal effects, such as photos and knickknacks, then it makes it more difficult for the buyer to imagine their own things in the room. So, get rid of the distractions and eliminate any clutter that may be present.

Get Rid of the Grime

A quick wipe down to "clean" the house isn't enough to get rid of the grime, and it is important that all areas are deep-cleaned in order to remove hard water buildup, dirt, or anything else that might be visible. Make sure that the windows are spotless, they should be washed to get rid of fingerprints or marks.

Exterior Preparation

Curb appeal matters, because buyers want their new home to look good on both the outside and inside. The exterior of the home is one of the first things that a person will look at when they are viewing the listing, so it is important that you cleanup around the house to make it look good.

The front yard is the most important, but don't neglect the back yard. It won't look natural to have front yard photos of a beautifully manicured lawn and flower beds, with a back yard that is in disarray.



Exterior tasks should include:

- Pull weeds
- Trim trees and overgrown shrubs
- Rake up the leaves
- Mow the lawn and use the right edging tools near cement
- Wrap up garden hoses and put them away in the garage or shed
- Pick up any items that may be laying around the yard, such as garden tools, garbage cans, toys, empty pots or pots with dead plants
- Cover dirt with mulch to make it look more attractive
- Move cars out of the driveway
- Sweep the porch and sidewalks
- If you have outdoor furniture, wipe it down and make sure that the cushions look clean and nice
- Close garage doors
- Use Broom to Remove cobwebs from eaves and door frames
- Remove toys, sport balls, basketball goals, soccer goals trampolines and any broken lawn furniture

Interior Preparation



Before the photographer arrives, you should make sure that you are letting in as much light as possible. Open up the blinds and curtains, and turn on every light in your home. All lamps and surface lights should be on, including the lights that are part of furniture and appliances such as those on the stove or built into a bookshelf. If any light bulbs are burned out, make sure to replace them and use high-wattage bulbs to make the room brighter.

Kitchen

As with other areas in the house, you want to get rid of any clutter that is visible in the room. The kitchen often collects a lot of things on the counters, but you want to make sure that the counters are as open as possible. Get rid of extra small appliances that are sitting around, as well as stacks of paper or dishes that may be placed at the end of the counter.

If you have child-proof equipment that is visible on the outside of the cabinets or cupboards, it is better to remove that equipment for the photos. Clear the school notices, crayon drawings, and magnets off of the fridge.



Clear away dish racks, cutting boards, tea towels, hand and dish soap bottles, cleaning products, mops, brooms and garbage cans. You can add a little decoration with a nice bowl of fresh fruit or a vase of flowers



Living Room

The formal sitting room in the house, it is especially important to make sure that the furniture is arranged appropriately. The goal of the room should be to create a beautiful and comfortable space, it should be an area where the potential buyer could imagine their family spending time.

If you have a nice coffee table book, set it out as decor on the table. Remove any magazines, because they often look trashy and cluttery. If bookshelves are in the room, take out half of the books and arrange the remaining books in a nice

pattern. Keep the nice, hardback and colorful books on the shelf, and clear out the ratty, old books.

Family Room

Small items are sometimes left in the living room, because it is the space where the family often spends a lot of time. Collect the TV remotes, video game systems, DVDs, or any other cluttered electronic items. Also, it is a good idea to pay attention to the way the electronic cords are arranged, and try to move them to a place so that they are out of sight. Clear out any toys that may have been left in the room by the kids.

Dining Room

Make sure the dining table is scrubbed and the chairs are arranged neatly around the table. You might consider adding a nice centerpiece on the table, such as bowl of fresh fruit or a floral arrangement. Don't leave any leftover plates or dishes on the table, and make sure that the remnants of the previous meal have been cleared away: wipe the table, sweep the floor, and mop the floor to remove any marks.



Bedrooms

It may be tempting to stuff everything under the bed in order to hide the clutter, but the items under the beds can often be viewed in the real estate photos (as well as real estate videos). Instead of trying to hide clothing and toys under the bed, move everything out of the room so that the space is as open as possible.

With teenager bedrooms, sometimes there are unique or usual decorations to match the personality of the child. Those decorations may need to be adjusted in order to make the space appear more generic and neutral, instead of trendy or hipster. Remember, you want the buyer to imagine themselves as if they were in the room, and unusual themes in the bedrooms can be somewhat distracting.

Look at pictures in magazines to see the way the beds are made, and match the bedding accordingly. You want the bed to look beautiful and inviting. Use a nice bedspread and big, fluffy pillows that are neatly arranged at the head of the bed.

If anything is sitting on the nightstand, get rid of it! Common things that need to be moved include: phone chargers, tissue boxes, lip balm, a glass of water, jewelry, or anything else that is kept at your bedside. Don't forget about the kid/guest bedrooms.

Bathrooms

In the bathroom, everything should be moved off the counter, including makeup, razors, soap, toothbrushes, and any other beauty products. In the shower and tub, remove the shampoo, soaps, washcloths, and baby toys.

The garbage cans, bathmats, laundry baskets, extra toilet paper, the toilet brush, and scales should also be moved out of the room. Finish it off by closing the toilet, and hang fresh towels on the towel rails.





No Pets

If you have any pets, it is best to have them out of the way during the photo shoot. Don't let the dogs run around in the yard during the photo shoot, and any indoor animals should be moved out of each room as it is being photographed.

- Place food/water bowls in closet or pantry
- Place pet beds/toys in closet or pantry

A Little Bit of Preparation Goes a Long Way

If your real estate photographer arrives, and they see that the home has not been prepared for the photo shoot, then your agent might be charged a cancellation fee and be forced to reschedule. Or, the photographer might move forward with the photo shoot, but the results will be unprofessional and they will not look good on your real estate listing. It is very important that you spend the time that is needed to make sure that your home is prepared so that the photographer has something to work with.

Selling your home is like selling a product - it must be marketed correctly to reach a specific buyer. Although your furnishings and decor are great for your lifestyle, it's important to optimize your home for the future buyer.

All of the tips suggested in the previous sections were approved by professional home stagers from the Real Estate Staging Association (RESA)



Mark Jacobs Productions looks forward to talking photos of your home. We want the photos of your home to be the best they can be. This requires teamwork and cooperation that will result in an outstanding online presence when your home goes LIVE on the market.

When we arrive to take photos of your property, we ask that all staging and cleaning be done prior to our arrival. To efficiently maintain our busy schedule and deliver the level of service our clients expect, we can not spend unnecessary time at the home waiting for it to be cleaned, dusted, de-cluttered, etc.

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Ultimate Guide: Photography Checklist

By following the checklist below you'll be ensuring that your property is in a 'tip-top' state for photographing.

General Areas

De-clutter as much as possible – store excess in garage

Replace all light bulbs with matching bulbs (Bright White Preferred)

Clean all windows inside and outside

Remove all lace/see through privacy curtains/blinds

Remove all personal items e.g. photos

Tidy/Hide all power leads/cables

Living/Family/Bonus Areas

Turn off TV and put remotes away

Remove all toys, fans, game consoles

Remove Exercise bikes/equipment

Arrange DVDs, games, books neatly in shelves

Turn off and clean ceiling fan

Kitchen/Dining Areas

Clean and put away all dishes/cutlery

Remove all appliances

Clean all splash backs and range hoods

Remove all detergents, dish clothes, dish rack, tea towels, plugs

Kitchen/Dining Areas

Ensure Range hood lights are working

Remove all objects from fridge e.g. magnets, photos

Remove bins and pet bowls

Minimize countertop top clutter e.g. salt and pepper, coffee, cereal boxes

Bedrooms

De-clutter toys, books, games, tissue boxes

Remove all personal items

Ensure bedside lamps are working and are on

Remove posters/stickers from walls

Clear away all clothes

Make sure all beds are made

Bathrooms

Remove all soaps/shampoo/face washers/bath mats/scales/bins

Remove all tooth brushes/tooth paste/razors/hair dryers

Make sure glass and mirrors are spotless

Remove all non-matching towels

Remove toilet cleaning utensils

Ensure toilet roll is not empty

Outside Areas

Mow the lawn and trim edges

Rake/sweep up leaves, sticks, papers

Remove all gardening equipment e.g. hoses, rakes, wheel barrows

Pressure clean driveway and paved areas (if possible)

Tidy garden fresh mulch and remove weeds

Remove all cars/boats/bikes/caravans

Remove all toys

Pool/Spa Areas

Ensure pool is clean

Remove all pool cleaners and poles

Remove all pool toys

Turn on any water features

30 Minutes Before The Shoot

Set the table (optional)

Place wine glasses and wine on outside table

Open all blinds

Turn on all lights

Turn off ceiling fans

Put pets away

Ensure vehicles can't be seen