



REAL ESTATE HERO

Moving & Staging

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Tips for Packing Like a Pro

1. Develop a master “to do” list so you won’t forget something critical.
2. Sort and get rid of things you no longer want or need. Have a garage sale, donate to a charity, or recycle.
3. Don’t throw out everything. If your inclination is to just toss it, ask yourself how frequently you use an item and how you’d feel if you no longer had it.
4. Pack like items together. Put toys with toys, kitchen utensils with kitchen utensils.
5. Decide what if anything you plan to move yourself. Precious items, such as family photos, valuable breakables, or must-haves during the move, should probably stay with you.
6. Use the right box for the item. Loose items encourage breakage.
7. Put heavy items in small boxes so they’re easier to lift. Keep weight under 50 lbs. if possible.
8. Don’t over-pack boxes and increase the chances they will break.
9. Wrap every fragile item separately and pad bottom and sides of boxes.
10. Label every box on all sides. You never know how they’ll be stacked and you don’t want to have to move other boxes aside to find out what’s there.
11. Use color-coded labels to indicate which room each item should go in. Color-code a floor plan for your new house to help movers.
12. Keep your moving documents together, including phone numbers, driver’s name, and van number. Also keep your address book handy.
13. Back up your computer files before moving your computer.
14. Inspect each box and all furniture for damage as soon as it arrives.
15. Remember, most movers won’t take plants.

5 Things to Do Before You Sell

1. Get estimates from a reliable repairperson on items that need to be replaced soon, such as a roof or worn carpeting, for example. In this way, buyers will have a better sense of how much these needed repairs will affect their costs.
2. Have a termite inspection to prove to buyers that the property is not infested.
3. Get a pre-sale home inspection so you'll be able to make repairs before buyers become concerned and cancel a contract.
4. Gather together warranties and guarantees on the furnace, appliances, and other items that will remain with the house.
5. Fill out a disclosure form provided by your sales associate. Take the time to be sure that you don't forget problems, however minor, that might create liability for you after the sale.

Tips for Holding a Yard Sale

Hold a yard sale to reduce the clutter in your home and get rid of items you don't want to move.

1. Check with your city government to see if you need a permit or license.
2. See if neighbors want to participate and have a "block" sale to attract more visitors.
3. Advertise. Put an ad in free classified papers, and put up signs and balloons at major intersections and in stores near your home.
4. Price items ahead and attach prices with removable stickers. Remember, yard sales are supposed to be bargains, so don't try to sell anything of significant value this way.
5. Check items before the sale to be sure you haven't including something you want by mistake.
6. Keep pets away from the sale.
7. Display everything neatly and individually so customers don't have to dig through boxes.
8. Have an electrical outlet so buyers can test appliances.
9. Have plenty of bags and newspaper for wrapping fragile items.
10. Get enough change, and keep a close eye on your cash.

10 Ways to Make Your House More Salable

1. Get rid of clutter. Throw out or file stacks of newspapers and magazines. Pack away most of your small decorative items. Store out-of-season clothing to make closets seem roomier. Clean out the garage.
2. Wash your windows and screens to let more light into the interior.
3. Keep everything extra clean. Wash fingerprints from light switch plates. Mop and wax floors. Clean the stove and refrigerator. A clean house makes a better first impression and convinces buyers that the home has been well cared for.
4. Get rid of smells. Clean carpeting and drapes to eliminate cooking odors, smoke, and pet smells. Open the windows.
5. Put higher wattage bulbs in light sockets to make rooms seem brighter, especially basements and other dark rooms. Replace any burnt-out bulbs.
6. Make minor repairs that can create a bad impression. Small problems, such as sticky doors, torn screens, cracked caulking, or a dripping faucet, may seem trivial, but they'll give buyers the impression that the house isn't well maintained.
7. Tidy your yard. Cut the grass, rake the leaves, trim the bushes, and edge the walks. Put a pot or two of bright flowers near the entryway.
8. Patch holes in your driveway and reapply sealant, if applicable.
9. Clean your gutters.
10. Polish your front doorknob and door numbers.

5 Ways to Speed Up Your Sale

1. Price it right. Set a price at the lower end of your property's realistic price range.
2. Get your house market-ready for at least two weeks before you begin showing it.
3. Be flexible about showings. It's often disruptive to have a house ready to show on the spur of the moment, but the more often someone can see your home, the sooner you'll find a seller.
4. Be ready for the offers. Decide in advance what price and terms you'll find acceptable.
5. Don't refuse to drop the price. If your home has been on the market for more than 30 days without an offer, be prepared to lower your asking price.

7 Steps to Preparing for an Open House

1. Hire a cleaning service. A spotlessly clean home is essential; dirt will turn off a prospect faster than anything.
2. Mow your lawn, and be sure toys and yard equipment are put away.
3. Serve cookies, coffee, and soft drinks. It creates a welcoming touch. But be sure the kitchen has been cleaned up; use disposable cups so the sink doesn't fill up.
4. Lock up your valuables, jewelry, and money. Although the real estate salesperson will be on site during the open house, it's impossible to watch everyone all the time.
5. Turn on all the lights. Even in the daytime, incandescent lights add sparkle.
6. Send your pets to a neighbor or take them outside. If that's not possible, crate them or confine them to one room (a basement or bath), and let the salesperson know where to find them.
7. Leave. It's awkward for prospective buyers to look in your closets and express their opinions of your home with you there.

10 Ways to Make Your Home Irresistible at an Open House

1. Put fresh or silk flowers in principal rooms for a touch of color.
2. Add a new shower curtain, fresh towels, and new guest soaps to every bath.
3. Set out potpourri or fresh baked goods for a homey smell.
4. Set the table with pretty dishes and candles.
5. Buy a fresh doormat with a clever saying.
6. Take one or two major pieces of furniture out of every room to create a sense of spaciousness.
7. Put away kitchen appliances and personal bathroom items to give the illusion of more counter space.
8. Lay a fire in the fireplace. Or put a basket of flowers there if it's not in use.
9. Depersonalize the rooms by putting away family photos, mementos, and distinctive artwork.
10. Turn on the sprinklers for 30 minutes to make the lawn sparkle.

Moving Tips for Sellers

1. Give your forwarding address to the post office, usually two to four weeks ahead of the move.
2. Notify your credit card companies, magazine subscriptions, and bank of the change of address.
3. Develop a list of friends, relatives, and business colleagues who need to be notified of the move.
4. Arrange to have utilities disconnected at your old home and connected at your new one.
5. Cancel the newspaper.
6. Check insurance coverage for moved items. Usually movers only cover what they pack.
7. Clean out appliances and prepare them for moving, if applicable.
8. Note the weight of the goods you'll have moved, since long-distance moves are usually billed according to weight. Watch for movers that use excessive padding to add weight.
9. Check with your condo or co-op about restrictions on using the elevator or particular exits.
10. Have a "first open" box with the things you'll need most—toilet paper, soap, trash bags, scissors, hammer, screwdriver, pencils and paper, cups and plates, water, snacks, and toothpaste.

Plus, if you're moving out of town:

1. Get copies of medical and dental records and prescriptions for your family and your pets.
2. Get copies of children's school records for transfer.
3. Ask friends for introductions to anyone they know in your new neighborhood.
4. Consider special car needs for pets when traveling.
5. Let a friend or relative know your route.
6. Carry traveler's checks or an ATM card for ready cash until you can open a bank account.
7. Empty your safety deposit box.
8. Put plants in boxes with holes for air circulation if you're moving in cold weather.

20 Low-Cost Ways to Spruce Up Your Home

Make your home more appealing for potential buyers with these quick and easy tips.

1. Trim bushes so they don't block windows and cut down on light.
2. Buy a new doormat.
3. Put a pot of bright flowers (or a small evergreen in winter) on your porch.
4. Put new doorknobs on your doors.
5. Put a fresh coating on your driveway.
6. Edge the grass around walks and trees.
7. Keep your garden tools out of site.
8. Be sure kids put away their toys.
9. Buy a new mailbox.
10. Upgrade the outside lighting.
11. Use warm, incandescent light bulbs for a homey feel.
12. Polish or replace your house numbers.
13. Clean your gutters.
14. Put out potpourri or burn scented candles.
15. Buy new pillows for the sofa.
16. Buy a flowering plant and put it in a window you pass by frequently.
17. Make a centerpiece for your table with fruit or artificial flowers.
18. Replace heavy curtains with sheer ones that let in more light.
19. Buy new towels.
20. Put a seasonal wreath on your door.