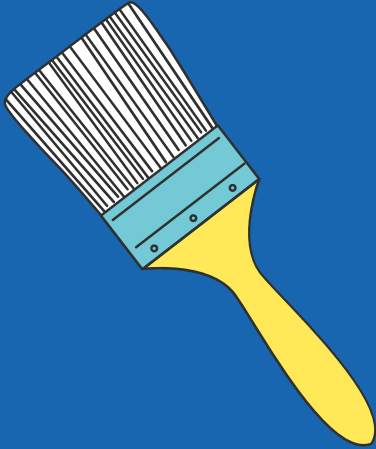




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# READY GUIDE



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Selling a home is stressful. With today's buyers looking for homes that are move-in ready, where do you start?

## Set the Bar

If you want to see what your home should look like, tour a model of a new housing development. The builder has spent a lot of time making sure every detail is perfect: colors, lighting, furniture and accessories. If you live in an area without new construction, visit open houses in your neighborhood. How does your home compare? What looks better or worse? Make a list.

## Declutter

Decluttering is the first step in getting your home market ready. Clutter creates an impression of a lack of space or storage. To make a great first impression, your home must look clean and spacious. Therefore, it's important to sell, donate or dispose of any items that you do not plan to take to a new home. For other items, put them in boxes and store in the house or rent a storage unit during the listing phase.

**Rooms.** Most homes have too much furniture. If a room feels cramped, consider removing pieces.

**Closets.** When there's open space in a closet, the closet feels big. When a closet is packed with clothes, it seems small. Therefore, closets should be half-full when the house is being listed.

## Paint

Every room should appear freshly painted and preferably, have neutral colors. If you take down pictures to paint a wall, consider how many pictures should be put back up. Make sure that there are no water stains on the ceiling.



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## Lighting

Your home needs to be bright, uncomfortably bright, when it's on the market. Change the lightbulbs to LED's and use the highest watt bulbs within the specs of your fixtures.

Let as much natural light into the rooms as you can. Remove heavy draperies. Also, consider adding lights. Recessed lighting is not very expensive to install and can have a huge impact.

## Flooring

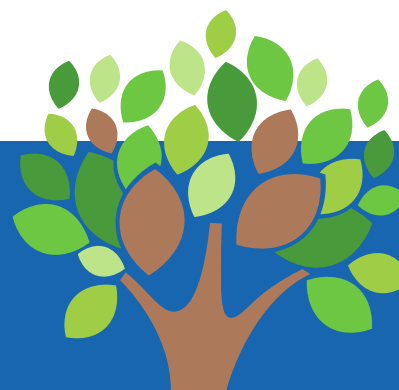
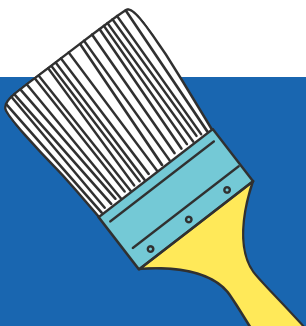
Floors experience high wear and tear. Any flooring issues must be addressed if you want to sell your home quickly and for the highest price. Is the hard wood scratched or lost its shine? Is the carpet worn or stained? Are any tiles broken or grout cracked?

## Rooms

**Kitchen.** The kitchen is the most important room in the house. It's normally the room buyers look at first. It should be open, updated, bright and spotless.

**Garage.** The garage should be clean and open. If the garage is filled with storage, buyers will not be able to tell if their cars will fit. Remove any oil stains on the floor.

**Basement.** The basement should be clean and dry. If dark, improve the lighting. If dusty, try a dehumidifier. Also, ensure that there are no "critters."





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## Depersonalize

Don't let buyers be distracted with your photos and other personal items. The home should be set up for the buyer.

## Curb Appeal

Look at your home from the street and run through the following checklist. Any brown spots in the yard? Any painting that needs to be refreshed? Power washing needed to remove dirt? Moss on the roof? Are shrubs overgrown or need to be replaced? Dead trees or branches? How's the mulch? Don't forget the mailbox.

Now, take a walk around the house. How's the driveway, sidewalk, garage doors, deck and patio? Finally, add some color to your yard. Plant flowers in the yard or place planters on the front steps.

## Pictures

While it may seem early to take photos of your home, you may want to take some photos depending upon the time of year. For example, if you have plants that bloom in the spring, capture them at their peak. If you have a great pool or deck, take pictures at a time when they look their best.

## Updates

There's a lot to do when getting your home ready for sale. Painting, cleaning and lighting can go a long way to improving your home's marketability. You may also want to consider updates to key rooms, such as kitchen and bathrooms, to increase your home value and its ability to sell quickly.

