RE/MAX Properties

Home Staging Benefits and Basics

Help buyers see the space, features, and possibilities

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Home staging prepares a property for photos and showings by making rooms feel clear, usable, and welcoming. It may involve rearranging existing furnishings, reducing clutter, or renting selected pieces. A full redesign is not always necessary.

1 Understand what staging can accomplish

Thoughtful staging can clarify a room's purpose, show how furniture fits, and draw attention to natural light or architectural features. It may improve a buyer's first impression online and in person. It cannot change location, replace necessary repairs, or guarantee a particular price or sale timeline.

2 Choose a plan that fits the home and budget

Ask your broker which spaces need attention and whether a consultation, owner-led preparation, partial staging, or vacant-home staging makes sense. Request a written scope covering setup, rental periods, extensions, removal, and responsibility for damage. Include storage and moving costs where needed.

3 Begin with cleaning and less clutter

Deep-clean kitchens, bathrooms, windows, floors, and visible surfaces. Address odor sources instead of masking them with fragrance. Reduce personal photos, collections, and excess decor so buyers can focus on the home. Store valuables, medications, and private documents securely before showings.

4 Arrange furniture for function and movement

Keep walking routes clear and use pieces suited to the room's size. Remove bulky or unnecessary furnishings and give each room a clear purpose. Highlight a fireplace, windows, or a useful seating area without blocking doors, vents, storage, or views.

5 Prioritize the rooms that matter most

Discuss the living room, primary bedroom, and kitchen first, then other spaces that help explain the layout. Keep kitchen counters and bathroom surfaces orderly. Organize closets to show their usable capacity. A few carefully prepared rooms may be more practical than furnishing every space.

What the research says - and what it does not promise

In NAR's 2025 Profile of Home Staging, 83% of buyers' agents said staging helped buyers visualize a property as a future home. This is a survey finding, not proof that every staged home will sell faster or for more. Local conditions, price, and property condition still matter.

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Make the presentation consistent from the entry to the photos

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Finish preparation before photography and keep the home ready for visits. Favor a clean, believable presentation that reflects the property buyers will actually experience.

6 Use paint and small updates selectively

Consider repainting worn or strongly personalized areas in coordinated, broadly appealing colors. Repair minor defects and consider simple hardware or fixture changes when worthwhile. Avoid a costly remodel solely for staging. Investigate leaks, moisture, and other underlying problems rather than covering them.

7 Balance lighting and simple finishing touches

Clean windows, open suitable window coverings, and use working lamps or fixtures to brighten darker areas. Keep decor restrained and surfaces usable. Avoid strong fragrances and excessive accessories. Fresh, clean rooms are more important than elaborate place settings or decorative themes.

8 Carry the welcome outside

Tidy the yard, clear walkways, and clean the entry. Maintain landscaping and check the appearance of the front door and exterior lighting. Match seasonal touches to the property without creating extra maintenance. Exterior presentation should support the same cared-for impression as the interior.

9 Use accurate, professional-quality listing images

Photograph the home after preparation is complete. If using virtual staging, clearly identify digitally staged images, follow applicable listing rules, and do not conceal defects or misrepresent permanent features. Virtual furnishings help illustrate possibilities but do not prepare the physical home for a showing.

10 Maintain the setup and adjust from feedback

Create a short showing routine: clear counters, make beds, put away personal items, and check lights and odors. Review comments with your broker and make useful adjustments. If interest is limited, consider price, condition, access, and marketing together rather than assuming more staging is the answer.

A practical order of work

Review priorities with your broker, address repairs, clean and declutter, arrange key rooms, add selective finishing touches, and then photograph. Set a spending limit and keep staging costs separate from repair and renovation costs so you can evaluate the complete sale-preparation budget.

Ask Doug Petersen to help tailor a preparation plan to your property and market. Adapted from the supplied staging outline. Sources: NAR 2025 Profile of Home Staging; NAR consumer staging guide. Educational information; results and costs vary.

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