



How To Get Your House Ready To Sell

By: Jessica Martin

Abstract

Preparing your house for sale is a critical step in ensuring a successful and profitable transaction. This process involves several key actions to enhance your property's appeal and attract potential buyers. From deep cleaning and decluttering to staging your home effectively, creating a welcoming atmosphere is essential. Repairs and upgrades, such as fresh paint or fixing minor damages, can significantly improve your home's value and make it stand out in the market. Additionally, addressing curb appeal, organizing necessary documents, and working with a professional real estate agent are important steps to streamline the selling process. This guide provides practical tips and insights to help you get your house market-ready and maximize your selling potential.



1. Introduction

Selling a house is a significant decision that requires careful planning and preparation to achieve the best results. A well-prepared home not only attracts more buyers but also helps secure better offers, reducing the time your property spends on the market. The process goes beyond simply listing your house—it involves creating an inviting and desirable space that appeals to prospective buyers. Whether it's enhancing your home's curb appeal, decluttering interiors, or making necessary repairs, each step plays a crucial role in presenting your property in its best light. This guide will walk you through the essential steps to get your house ready for sale, ensuring a smooth and successful selling experience.

2. What You Need To Know Before Selling Your Home



Choosing when to buy or sell a home is one of those crucial financial planning decisions that will have a lasting impact on your journey to financial independence. For many, home equity remains the single largest asset on the personal net worth statement. The current homeownership rate in Canberra is just under 64 percent. That is why it was good news for potential sellers to hear that existing home sales were up 5.9 percent in October from the previous year.

This was a positive surprise for the housing market. According to the National Association of Realtors, housing inventory went down slightly, which would normally be a positive sign for prospective sellers as this trend typically drives prices higher. But that news was tempered by rising interest rates that could impact future sales and purchasing power for potential buyers.

While it's important to never try to time the stock market, it's just as difficult to time the housing market. The millions of homeowners who purchased real estate prior to the housing bubble provide evidence of the inherent challenges of predicting future housing prices and economic conditions. Regardless of your current level of confidence in the housing market, there are many reasons that may prompt your desire to sell a home or investment property.

Whether you are relocating for work, moving to a more desirable neighborhood, making room for a growing family, or downsizing you need to take steps to make sure that your house is ready to sell. The peak season for selling a home in Canberra in most housing markets across the country is typically during the spring. However, there are some strategies that you can put into action to help sell your home regardless of the season or current economic conditions that are out of your control. Here are some tips and suggestions to help you get ready to sell your home or investment property:

Research your local housing market.

If you have lived in your current home for at least a couple of years, you most likely have a general idea of housing prices in your neighborhood and local economic conditions. It is still a good idea to do some additional homework and research housing activity in your area.

Find out how many houses are currently on the market in your area and the average number of days they have been listed. It's also helpful to look at comparable homes in your neighborhood to get a general idea of what the competition looks like. A comparable or "comp" home has similar features and is usually located within a close proximity to your home. Examining the number of bedrooms, bathrooms, lot size, and other features are important when seeking out comparable properties. If you really want to go the extra mile in reviewing comparable properties, visit open houses and search real estate websites that publish on the Multiple Listing Service (MLS).

Set a reasonable asking price. Pricing your home correctly from the start is extremely important. Avoid making emotional decisions or anchoring your listing price to the home's previous value.

If you live in a "hot" market, there are more buyers than sellers and prices are likely being driven up by that demand. You can often price your house more aggressively as long as you stick within reasonable price limits. In a "cold" market, buyers tend to be more selective and pricing usually needs to be at or slightly below market value to attract an offer.

Interview real estate professionals and other potential team members. Do your homework if you decide to utilize the service of a real estate agent. It is suggested to interview 2-3 potential realtors to make sure you are choosing the best professional possible. You can use this guide to help you find the right questions to ask when talking with a real estate agent.

Other potential members of your professional team include a closing attorney, home inspector, photographer, landscaper, handyman, painter, and home stager. If you decide to go the DIY route, be sure to understand state laws regarding the sale of real estate. Some states require sellers to provide disclosure forms that obligate you to report any known facts about the property's condition that may impact the value or the desirability to purchase the home.

Improve your home's curb appeal. When it comes to buying a home in Canberra, first impressions have a significant impact. While significant landscaping updates aren't likely to play a major factor in a buyer's decision making process, it does help to avoid anything that could detract from that positive first impression.

Get rid of the clutter. This step includes removing personalized photos, memorabilia, and other knickknacks. It often helps to get an independent, objective assessment of what

should stay and what should go during the staging process. Major renovations aren't usually necessary, but a fresh coat of paint and minor repairs can leave a potential buyer with a good first impression. It's also helpful to have different pictures and furniture layouts available to provide buyers with a vision of how various spaces could be used in different ways to meet their lifestyle needs and desires.



Estimate the potential profit (or loss). Before you ever get to the point of reviewing a purchase offer, you should already evaluate potential gains or losses within your acceptable price range. The selling price will be reduced by the following items:

Real estate sales commissions

- Fees paid at closing
- Title charges
- Government recording and transfer charges
- Any additional settlement charges
- Debt obligations related to paying off any existing mortgages
- Home repairs included in the sales contract or repair work completed prior to putting your house on the market.
- Preparation work to get your house ready for the market such as landscaping, painting, etc.

Understand current tax laws. Selling a home is a taxable event. The good news is that the IRS provides tax breaks for homeowners. The main requirement is that you generally must have used the house as your primary residence for 2 out of the previous 5 years. The current capital gains exclusion amount is \$250,000 for single taxpayers and \$500,000 for married couples that file jointly.

3. Declutter Your Home



The best way to prevent decluttering from becoming overwhelming is to do it in stages and zones. Prioritize the areas that need it most with a decluttering checklist. Focus on one room or even one section within a room (e.g., kitchen cabinets), and complete that area thoroughly before moving on to the next space.

Keep reading to learn helpful methods to declutter your home room by room.

Benefits of Decluttering Your Space

There are numerous benefits to making your space as free of clutter as possible.

- You will have less "stuff" to clean and organize and it won't feel overwhelming.
- It will reduce the stress and anxiety a messy and crowded space may cause.
- Finding items when you need them will be easier and take less time.
- A de-cluttered space enables one to focus more and stay on task.

Tips for Decluttering Your Home

Use Containers to Sort Items

Before you start to declutter your home, have containers defined for the following purposes to sort items:

- Put away: Items that have crept out of their designated storage spaces.
- Fix/mend: Items that need something before they're put away, such as a shirt with a missing button.
- Recycle: Items that consist of recyclable materials.
- Trash: Items to throw away in the household trash.
- Donate Unwanted items that are still in good condition can be donated to a charitable organization or another person.

Keep These Decluttering Rules in Mind

- 12/12/12 Rule: Locate 12 items to throw away, 12 to donate, and 12 to be returned to their proper home in Canberra.
- 20/20 Rule: Get rid of items you can replace for \$20 and under 20 minutes.
- 80/20 Rule: According to this rule, we use 20 percent of our belongings 80 percent of the time. Either get rid of or store away the 80 percent you don't use regularly.
- Five-Second Rule: Sort through items and give yourself five seconds to remember the last time the item you're holding was used. If you can't remember within five seconds, it's time to get rid of it.
- Rule of Five: This rule is the five-year rule. When decluttering and deciding on an item, assess items not used in five years and consider removing them.

Creating a Decluttering Timeline

If you don't have a lot of stuff, you may be able to declutter your house in a day, a weekend, or use a longer 30-day timeline. Keep your goals realistic and attainable to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Break down the spaces you need to declutter and estimate how long each will take, giving yourself buffer time in case something doesn't go as planned.

Start by cleaning before you declutter, so your everyday items are tidy and out of the way. Consider starting in a space with only a small amount of clutter, so you can get it done

quickly and feel like you've made progress on your overall decluttering timeline to stay motivated.

How to Declutter Your Space, Room by Room

The Bathroom

- **Medicine cabinet:** Take everything out, and discard outdated medications, makeup, and skincare products. Put everything you're keeping immediately back into the cabinet, storing the items you use most often at eye level.
- **Cabinet drawers:** Remove everything, and quickly evaluate what you're keeping and tossing. Put the items you're keeping back into their drawers, with the items you use most often in the top drawers.
- **Shower, tub, and bathroom sink:** Pull everything out from these areas and declutter the items there.

Lastly, everything that did not have a home can be quickly sorted into the bins you have staged for the purpose.

The Bedroom



First, make your bed. It's hard to feel any progress decluttering a bedroom while an unmade bed stares you in the face.

- **Nightstands:** Remove anything on them that doesn't belong there, and add it to your put-away bin. This may include books you've already finished reading, pens, paper, and mail. Throw out or recycle anything you no longer use, such as empty tissue boxes, pens that have gone dry, or chargers that no longer work.
- **Tops of your dressers, chests, and bureaus:** Pay careful attention to any strewn clothing. Anything that needs folding or hanging goes into the put-away bin. If you're afraid it may wrinkle further, you can lay clothes on your bed.
- **Drawers:** Take everything out. Pull out anything no longer worn, and put it in your donation bin. Fold and store the clothing you're keeping.
- **Desk or vanity table:** Resist the urge to shove things back into drawers; instead, put them in your put-away bin. Toss garbage or recycle anything you haven't used in six months.

Return items to their proper places. Fold, hang, and store any clothing. If you're now eyeing your closet, we'll tackle that next.

Closet and Clothing

OK, deep breath. It's time to declutter your closet. The easiest way to tackle a closet is to declutter your clothing by type. It's much easier to decide whether to toss or keep a pair of jeans if you're looking at your entire jeans collection at once. So start pulling out different types of clothing, and choose what you'll toss and keep.

Once you've gone through each type of clothing, you will have four piles to deal with:

- **Organize:** Put away anything that was in the wrong spot for example, if you had a pair of socks in your closet, put them in your dresser.
- **Launder:** Put dirty laundry into the hamper, or bring it to the laundry room.
- **Repair:** Anything that needs to be repaired from holes, tears, or missing buttons should go to the tailor or dry cleaner.
- **Donate:** To eliminate clothes, take them to a donation center or consignment store.

The Entryway, Mudroom, and Foyer

You may not have a traditional mudroom or foyer, but you likely have an entryway. No matter its size, the best way to make an entryway most functional is to declutter it regularly.

- Desk, console, or side tables: Go through each drawer, remove the contents, and decide to toss or keep each item. Go over the tops of each desk or console as well. Do you have a space for your keys and other important items? Make sure everything is accessible and not too crowded. This makes it easier to leave the house each morning with what you need.
- Hall closet: Declutter it like any other closet: Start with shoes, boots, and jackets, followed by accessories.

The entry is another area that picks up a lot of clutter from other rooms. Spend time putting away things from other rooms that have made their way to the entry.

The Kitchen

Keeping your kitchen clutter-free can be challenging because different activities occur there—cooking, eating, and socializing, especially if your kitchen is on the smaller side. As a result, the kitchen has numerous types of items stored in it.

- Pantry, cabinets, and drawers: The first step is to empty each space, assess each item, and put everything back where it belongs. Start with your powerhouse storage spaces, such as the pantry and upper cabinets. Then move onto the lower cabinets, drawers, and the space under the kitchen sink.

3.1. What Are The Easy Ways To Declutter And Clean Basement?



It is common for many homeowners to find their basement in a mess. Clutter is neither good for your mental health nor the visual appeal of your home in Canberra. Once you find yourself facing the intimidating task of dealing with all the mess collected in the basement over a long period, you will realise how difficult it is. This is where decluttering and cleaning comes in. Decluttering is not only one of the best ways to create more space, but it will also positively impact your well-being.

You will be motivated to do it if you just imagine your basement appearing really clean and organised. Although you do have the option of hiring professionals who provide services like house cleaning and budget end of lease cleaning Canberra, you can also go the DIY route if you prefer that. Here are the easy ways to declutter and clean the basement. Utilise these tips to make your basement clean and organised.

1. Prepare a Detailed Plan

There is no doubt that decluttering your basement can be a tough task, particularly if you have used this part of your house for keeping unwanted items. This is why it is best recommended to go with a plan when it is time to declutter. Set a time for doing work and know what you would like to get out of the session. It is not possible to declutter the entire space in a single day, so it is better to break down the work into small and manageable tasks. You should also take breaks frequently so that you are not overwhelmed.

2. Get Rid of Unwanted Stuff

Once you are ready with your plan, start decluttering. It is best to get rid of things you no longer need and use. Focus majorly on the large items at the beginning and keep the momentum going until you have evaluated all the stuff. Think about donating things that still work perfectly fine. Many thrift stores and other places that accept such donations can really benefit from this. Get rid of any trash from the basement so that you are left with things you use. If there is a very valuable item that you no longer use, selling it will be a great option.

3. Thoroughly Clean the Basement

Once you have decluttered the basement, professionals who do budget end of lease cleaning Canberra recommend cleaning it. Firstly, ensure the place is completely empty as that will make cleaning easier. You won't have to move things around every five minutes when cleaning. Cleaning on a sunny and bright day is advisable because you can then keep all the stuff outside for a while without worrying about them getting damaged. Start with vacuuming the surfaces to get rid of loose dust. Follow up with mopping the entire basement. Try to clean from top to bottom and left to right to ensure you are getting into every corner. Once you complete these tasks, you will see how clean and visually appealing your basement looks.

4. Pay Attention to Walls When Cleaning



During the cleaning procedure, it is important to pay special attention to the walls. This is because they can collect dust and dirt, making the space look less aesthetic. According to professionals who do expert end of lease cleaning Canberra, using a sponge and a mild cleaning solution will be a good idea. You can prepare the solution by combining $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of white vinegar, 1 teaspoon of liquid dish soap, and a quart of warm water. Work from top to bottom to get the best results.

5. Use Airtight Bins to Keep Your Space Organised

Once you have removed all the unnecessary items, it is time to organise the basement. Keeping it organised will ensure that it looks visually appealing while allowing you to easily find the item you are looking for. It is best recommended to place stuff like off-season clothing and other similar items you do not need often in airtight bins to ensure everything looks neat and clean. This way, you won't need to go through numerous boxes when you are looking for any item. So, once you have cleaned this space with the help of experts who offer services like professional end of lease cleaning Canberra, use airtight bins to organise the basement.

6. Properly Label All the Bins

Labelling each of the bins is highly recommended to further organise your space. Mention the items each bin contains to facilitate easier identification. This will greatly help when you

are urgently looking for a particular item. You will just have to walk over to the collection of bins, read the labels, and identify the bin you are searching for. Otherwise, you will have to search through all the bins, which will lead to clutter. So, ensure you label all the boxes properly to keep the space organised.

4. Smart Curb Appeal Ideas



Even changing the hardware on your front door can boost your home's worth.

First impressions do matter, especially in real estate. Buyers might be less likely to check out the rest of a house if the outside is rundown or unattractive, or the porch decor is lacking. Even if the interiors are stunning, a house that lacks curb appeal will feel unwelcoming to guests and potential buyers alike.

So if you're selling your house (or plan to eventually), take a look at some top curb appeal ideas, including tips from pros and research from the real estate site Zillow. You'll be ready to put your best house forward with these expert tricks.

What Is Curb Appeal, Exactly?

You know curb appeal when you see it. Yet sometimes it's hard to pinpoint what exactly makes a particular house on the block so much more welcoming than the next. "You don't need a big budget to create outstanding curb appeal," says Deb Cohen, who runs the popular Instagram account [@thefrontdoorproject](https://www.instagram.com/thefrontdoorproject).

What you do need is color and contrast, balance, and good old-fashioned TLC. "Contrast dictates what our eye sees first, like a pot of yellow flowers against red brick," explains Paula

Monthofer, a real estate agent in Flagstaff, Arizona. Balance—a thoughtfully composed garden bed and symmetrical window boxes—affects our first impressions more subtly. "Balance and symmetry convey stability," Monthofer says.

Curb appeal goes way beyond what guests and neighbors have to say about the plants for the front of the house you've chosen. A few quick, inexpensive changes to your home's exterior could help make the process of selling your home easier and faster in Canberra. You might even add more value to the asking price.

"Even if you're just looking to add a little extra pizzazz to your home's exterior, boosting your curb appeal can be quicker and easier than you might expect. You just have to pick the right projects," says Kerrie Kelly of Kerrie Kelly Design Lab. "Many of these quick-fix projects can be done in an afternoon, and without professional help. But be careful—anything that requires electrical work, fencing, or major landscaping is best left to the experts."

Paint Your Front Door

First on your to-do list should be the front door—use it (with the right front door colors) to greet any potential buyers. "Let your front door speak to your home's style with a new coat of paint," says Kelly. "A beautiful front door color can completely refresh your home." You can go with a tried-and-true classic like black or charcoal, or pick a bold hue like bright red or yellow.

Replace Your Mailbox

It's all about the details, so if your mailbox is rusty or looks like it's going to topple over, it might be time to bring a new one in. Go with a color scheme that matches your house, and remember that your mailbox should be placed 6 to 8 inches back from the curb.

Update Street Numbers and Door Hardware

"Replace your street numbers," says Christina Salway of 11211 Interior Design. "Don't underestimate the impact of little details like swapping out junky old street numbers for something fresh and modern. It can be transformative and only takes about \$15 and 15 minutes!" The same can be said for door hardware (doorknobs and door knockers).

Give Garage Doors a Lift

In many neighborhoods, garage doors dominate what you see from the street, but they often lack the detail or depth of the rest of the home. One fix that requires zero commitment (and almost as little effort) is temporary or magnetic decorative hardware. Accessories like handles, hasps, and faux window panels add interest and remain secure, says DIY expert Jenna Shaughnessy, creator of the blog Jenna Kate at Home. Try some magnetic hinges and handles.

Garage doors are also paintable, and shifting away from basic white (or worse, dingy whitish) can have a huge impact. Paint the garage to match your siding so it blends in (it can help that sometimes-eyesore disappear), or opt for the same contrasting shade as your front door.

This can be a weekend project if you use fast-drying exterior semigloss paint, like Sherwin-Williams SnapDry Door & Trim Paint. Some door finishes may require a coat of primer first; ask at the store if you're not sure. Save this project for mild, dry weather—not humid or rainy—so the paint can dry properly.

Create a Grand Entrance

Want to go big on the curb appeal? Add structures at the beginning of the path to your front door—an arbor, a trellis, a gate, or even a pair of columns with planters—to frame your front entrance. This fresh and verdant display of hydrangeas gives this home a brimming-with-life feel that makes you want to step inside and explore.

Add a Water Feature

It doesn't have to be big, fancy fountain to add wow factor to your yard. Even a small birdbath or a decorative bee and butterfly oasis can be a lovely touch and help turn your yard into a welcoming spot for wildlife.

Add Potted Plants



Plants can breathe some life into a space and make it seem lived-in and well-cared for. "Varying heights of annuals or perennials grouped together at either side of the walkway can

make a huge statement for your curb appeal," says Thee. And adding flowers can be a cost-effective way to bring a burst of color to your entrance.

Do a Thorough Cleaning

Cleaning your home's outdoor living space, like the porch and patio, can also do wonders for your curb appeal. "Power-wash or hose down your exterior, driveway, and sidewalk," says Leslie Ebersole, a real estate agent for Baird & Warner in Illinois's Fox Valley region. Sponge down your porch furniture with warm water and a little dish soap.

Clean up Your Garden Edges

If your garden plants have started creeping into your lawn (or vice versa!), take the time to delineate the two. You can use hardscaping like slate or brick that adds to your front yard aesthetic, or use landscape border edging for a more invisible (but still sharp) border between the two.

Create a Cohesive Color Scheme

Consider your home's paint colors when you're choosing plantings (or vice versa). Choosing flowers or bushes that coordinate or match your paint colors (and each other) can give your home a polished, sophisticated look.

5. Paint Your House



Painting a house's exterior does a lot more than just make it look better. A proper paint job also protects the home by placing a preventative barrier against wind and water and other

weather threats. With the time and financial investment involved in this home improvement project in Canberra, care should be taken to make sure it is done correctly and with the best possible materials. This will prolong the time until your house needs to be painted again. Though the work is time consuming, you can breeze through the instructions on how to paint a house.

Preparing the House For Painting

Choose the right time of year. It's important to take the time of year into account when painting the exterior of your home, as very cold (below 40 degrees F) or very hot temperatures can ruin your paint job.

Clean the surface of the house. If you're lucky, the only real preparation you'll need to do before the paint job is to clean the surface of your house. Use a hose to wash down the walls and go over any stubborn dirt with a wire brush and some warm soapy water.

Remove any defective paint. If there is any old, defective paint on the surface of your house, you will need to remove it before you can proceed. This includes any paint that is loose, blistered or chipped.

Make any necessary repairs. Before you begin painting, you will also need to inspect your house for damage and make any necessary repairs. It may seem like an effort, but it will ensure that your house looks its best once the paint job is complete.

Figure out how much paint you're going to need. It's a good idea to figure out how much paint you're going to need before you begin painting. This eliminates the risk of running out of paint halfway through.

Prime the surface. In some circumstances, you will need to apply a coat of primer to the surface of your house before you can begin painting. Primer provides a good foundation for the paint and will help it to last longer, as it provides extra protection from the elements.

Choose your paint. Choose a high quality exterior paint, such as 100 percent acrylic latex. This will produce a better color, dry faster and be more durable in the long run.

Mix your paint. If you bought several cans of paint, you will need to mix all of the paint from individual cans together in one large container.

Painting the House

Decide which paint application method to use. Whether you use a brush, roller or paint sprayer to paint your house is ultimately a matter of personal preference. Each method has its benefits - using a brush gives you greater control over the painting, using a roller makes the job more efficient, and using a paint sprayer provide heavier coverage.

Paint the sidings. Paint all of the sidings on your house before you work on the trim. This gets the bulk of the work out of the way, and also speeds up the process as you won't need to switch between colors.



Apply a second coat. Once you have waited the recommended amount of time for the paint to dry, you should consider applying a second coat - if time and budget allows.

Paint the trim. Once the sidings are complete it's time to go back and paint the trim, whether it's the same color as the rest of the house or not. This can be quite time-consuming, but will really give your paint job a professional-looking finish.

Conclusion

Getting your house ready to sell is an investment of time, effort, and resources that can yield significant rewards. By thoroughly cleaning, decluttering, and making necessary repairs, you enhance your home's appeal and attract more buyers. Thoughtful staging and curb appeal improvements can further set your property apart, leaving a lasting impression. Additionally, collaborating with a trusted real estate professional ensures your house is marketed effectively and positioned competitively. With careful preparation and attention to detail, you can maximize your property's value and achieve a smooth, successful sale.

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