

STACEY'S HOMES

WITH STEILL

THINGS TO DO BEFORE A REAL ESTATE PHOTOSHOOT

1. Eliminate clutter

When you stage your home before a shoot, your goal is for it to look uncluttered and tastefully furnished, almost like a hotel. You will want it to be somewhat a blank slate so it appeals to a broad spectrum of homebuyers. After visiting the space, you want them to be able to imagine themselves living there. So, take a good look around and eliminate any of the following that might be distracting:

- ◆ Stacks of paper
- ◆ Pet supplies
- ◆ Remote controls
- ◆ Toys
- ◆ Family photos
- ◆ Laundry items
- ◆ Toiletries
- ◆ Garbage cans
- ◆ Dish racks
- ◆ Electrical cords
- ◆ Refrigerator magnets

Keep the kitchen as clean as possible, with extra emphasis on keeping the counter clean. Less is always more.

2. Clean windows and floors

Make sure that your windows and floors are visibly clean. The camera can be forgiving on a little dust, but a dirty window or floor can really show up especially if there is direct sunlight in your photo.

3. Check light bulbs

Make sure that all your light bulbs work both inside and outside. If there are any that are dim or out, make sure they get replaced by the time the photoshoot is scheduled. Have all lights on at the time the photos are taken. Brighter homes look more inviting!

4. Stage rooms carefully

Most photos are taken from the viewpoint of the doorway, so arrange the room so it looks its best from that direction. Take out or bring in any furniture that will make the room feel open and inviting.

Keep artwork modest and not detracting from the space. Also, make sure any open walls that appear bare are decorated with something tasteful and size appropriate.

5. Pay attention to curb appeal

The photo of the exterior of your home can be the most important shot of all, so make sure you keep the front appealing enough that they want to see more. Keep the driveway and front of the home clear of all vehicles. Consider adding seating with comfortable cushions to a porch or patio to make the entrance inviting.

6. Bring flowers or plants

Color makes everything look better. Add tasteful arrangements of flowers or fruit on flat surfaces like dining room tables or kitchen counters. Keep in mind that you don't want these extra touches to distract from the room itself or make the photographer's job harder to highlight your space.

7. Give yourself enough time

Be sure to schedule a shoot with no conflicting showings or open houses and leave extra time on the front and back end if you schedule something that day to avoid extra pressure or awkward moments with potential buyers.

8. Clean up the backyard

Take a good look at your backyard before the shoot to make sure there are no visible weeds, overgrown shrubs or low-hanging tree branches in the yard. Mow and rake the lawn right before the shoot and be sure to remove any items such as garden hoses, garbage cans, empty pots or yard clutter.

9. Open blinds and curtains

Light makes everything look better, so open all blinds and curtains. If your home has an unsightly view out of certain windows that you don't want to highlight, then you might want to keep them closed for those photos only.