

5 Ways to Declutter Before Listing the Family Home



1. Toss the Trash

We often become “clutter blind” to things that collect in our homes. If you have mail waiting to be sorted, handled, and discarded, magazines and newspapers you intended to read (but probably won’t), and things that need to be recycled, donated, or thrown away, do that now. Go through every room in your house with a garbage bag and a donation bag. (Be sure to shred any sensitive documents so this information doesn’t fall into the wrong hands!)



2. Pare Down Furniture

If you have rooms overstuffed with furniture, they’ll appear too small and unwelcoming to potential buyers. Eliminate all unessential furniture and any upholstered items that are threadbare or excessively worn. It’s better to have less and use your best pieces to stage your home.



3. Depersonalize

Your home probably contains your favorite collections, cherished photographs, children’s artwork, postcards, and memorabilia. These items should be placed in specially marked boxes and tucked away for your move or to give to family members. This will help potential buyers imagine how the home will look with their items.



4. Clear the Surfaces

Look at every flat surface in your home. Things tend to collect on countertops, tables, and shelves, making a home look crowded and giving buyers the impression there’s no room for their life to unfold in this space. If a surface has more than a single decorative item (or a related grouping of three things), it’s too “busy” to be inviting to a potential buyer.



5. Unstuff the Closets

Before listing your home, every closet should appear spacious and airy. Crowded closets look too small to use.

In bedrooms, remove everything except for the in-season clothes you often wear and enjoy most. Everything else should be packed up or donated.

Linen closets should be organized with a maximum of two fresh changes of sheets and pillowcases for each bed. Keep only your nicest towels and washcloths. Retire the ratty ones to the rag box.

The hall closet should hold jackets and coats for the current season and have enough room to accept visitors’ coats.

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