



Prepare Your House for Sale

Declutter and Reclaim Useful Space

In real estate, buyers buy space. The more space you're able to show, whether it be living or storage space, the more you're able to ask for your house. Unfortunately, that's easier said than done. Many people are packrats. Rooms have too much furniture and you'll find stuff jammed in every nook and cranny. There's little space for walking sometimes, much less for living. Decluttering is the process of reclaiming the space in your house from years of accumulation.

TAKE INVENTORY AND CATEGORIZE

Go through each room of the house and focus on one area at a time. Separate items into these three categories:

Trash

- ▶ Expired food and medications
- ▶ Dated newspapers and magazines
- ▶ Broken items that can't be easily fixed

Donate/Sell

Consider donating items that are in good condition but of no further use to you. Another option is selling them on websites such as Facebook Marketplace, LetGo or Craigslist.

- ▶ Clothing, shoes and accessories that are out of style or no longer fit
- ▶ Electronics that have been replaced: old computers, TVs, stereo equipment, phones, etc.

Keep

Take this category very seriously. Ask yourself the following questions and answer them honestly:

- ▶ Do you know what it does?
- ▶ Did you even remember that you have it?
- ▶ Have you used it since your last move?

If you answered 'no' to any of these questions, then you should consider moving the item to one of the other piles.

RESTORE ROOMS TO CORE FUNCTIONS

Give the rooms a functional identity and return them to their original intended use. For example, if your living room is doubling as an exercise room, change it back to a living room. When the rooms are in disarray with mixed functions, buyers will likely think the design of your house isn't laid out very well or worse, they'll think a room is missing altogether.

DEPERSONALIZE

You want your buyers to visualize themselves living in your house, not you living in it. Personal artifacts are distracting so you have to put them away – photographs, souvenirs, trophies, medals, certificates, posters, religious items and family heirlooms.

PACK FOR MOVING

Once you've thrown away all the junk, returned other people's things, donated all the stuff you don't need and returned the rooms to their core functions, the house will feel a whole lot lighter and spacious. Create even more space by packing overstocked, seasonal or rarely used items. Store the boxed items in an offsite storage location or in a corner of the attic, basement or crawlspace.