

# 20-Point Home Staging Checklist

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## How to Use This Checklist

This **20-Point Home Staging Checklist** is your go-to guide to make sure your home is ready to wow buyers—whether you're about to take photos or open the door for showings. Think of it as your friendly final walkthrough: a simple, high-impact list to help you spot anything you might've missed.

Each step is clear, action-oriented, and focused on creating a powerful first impression when people say, “Wow, I could live here.” You'll find it laid out in a clean, easy-to-follow format with plenty of white space for notes or quick checks. Just walk through the home and mark off each point. You've got this!

### 20 Essential Home Staging To-Dos:

- **1. Maximize Curb Appeal:** Mow the lawn, trim shrubs, and sweep walkways. Make the front door inviting with a fresh coat of paint (if needed), a fresh doormat and a pot of flowers on the front step. (Buyers often form an opinion before stepping inside, so curb appeal is key!)
- **2. Deep Clean Everywhere:** Clean the entire home top to bottom, including floors, counters, windows, appliances, and corners. A spotless home signals that it's well-maintained. Don't forget to air it out for freshness, and I like to light scented candles throughout the house to give the home a beautiful scent. Blow them out before you leave, and don't worry, the scent will linger in the home. (Tip: Do not go overly sweet with the candle scent, think fresh and clean. If it is during the holidays, a nice pumpkin and spice scent for Thanksgiving and a nice evergreen or cinnamon scent for Christmas.)



- **3. Declutter All Rooms:** Remove excess and oversized furniture to improve flow. Clear off countertops, tables, and floors of any unnecessary items. Open space makes rooms feel larger. Less is more!
- **4. Tidy Up Storage Areas:** Buyers will peek into closets, pantries, and the garage. Organize these spaces neatly (use baskets or bins in closets, line up shoes, clear off the garage floor as much as possible). Showing ample storage space is a plus, so if needed, box up and store any overflow belongings offsite.
- **5. Depersonalize:** Take down personal photos, memorabilia, and quirky decorations. You want buyers to picture their family in the home, not yours.
- **6. Arrange Furniture for Flow:** Configure each room's layout so it's easy to walk through and feels spacious. In living areas, pull furniture a few inches away from walls and ensure there are clear pathways. Remove any pieces that block doors or windows.
- **7. Update Fixtures in Sight:** If any light fixtures or cabinet knobs are outdated and replacing them is feasible, do it. Quick swaps like modern kitchen cabinet hardware or a stylish dining room light fixture can modernize the look without major expense.

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- **8. Neutralize the Decor:** Repaint boldly colored walls in neutral tones (Alabaster, Wheat Bread, Greige) if possible, or at least cover any loud wallpaper with neutral artwork. Provide a neutral canvas that will appeal to the widest range of buyers.
- **9. Highlight Key Features:** Walk through each room and identify its best feature—make sure it stands out. If it's a fireplace, have it cleaned and place a simple arrangement of candles or logs. If it's a beautiful view, have windows spotless and maybe a chair positioned to enjoy the view. *"Showcase the top three strengths"* of your property with small touches that draw the eye.
- **10. Create Cozy Corners:** Identify any awkward empty spaces or overly large rooms and create a purpose for them. For instance, add a reading chair and lamp to a bare loft area, or a desk and chair to an empty nook to show a home office spot. These small staged moments can help buyers see how every square foot can be used.
- **11. Add Greenery or Flowers:** Place a few artificial green plants or floral arrangements in key spots—a dramatic vase of flowers on the dining table (stay with monochromatic florals so they don't scream "fake"), a small potted orchid in the bathroom, a tall ficus or fern in an empty corner. Adding greenery and florals makes a home feel fresh and inviting.

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- **12. Let in the Light:** Open all curtains and blinds to flood rooms with natural light. Before a showing, turn on lights in the house (especially lamps) to make every space feel bright and welcoming. Studies show that more light creates positive impressions of a space.
- **13. Set Comfortable Temperatures:** Ensure the home is at a comfortable temperature (not too hot or cold). If it's summer, turn on AC ahead of time; if winter, make sure it's warm and cozy. Comfort influences a buyer's desire to linger.
- **14. Appeal to the Senses:** Consider playing soft background music in a main area (classical or jazz at low volume) to create an inviting atmosphere. Also, ensure the home smells pleasant—no strong pet or smoke odors. A classic trick is to bake cookies or simmer cinnamon before an open house, creating a subtle “welcome home” aroma.
- **15. Make Every Bed Hotel-Neat:** Beds should be made with crisp linens and extra pillows. Ideally use neutral bedding (I like white) with coordinating throw pillows (see my 7 Seconds Book for how I stage beds). This simple step instantly upgrades a bedroom atmosphere.

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- **16. Set the Dining Scene:** An attractive but simple table setup in the dining room or eat-in kitchen helps buyers envision entertaining. It could be as basic as a runner down the table and a dramatic monochromatic floral arrangement, or a full place-setting for each seat—nothing ornate enough to distract. The idea is to suggest “this home is great for gatherings.”
- **17. Bathroom Beauty:** Put out fresh towels and remove the bath mat. Hide all personal toiletry items (use a basket under the sink for daily items after use). If you have nice bath salts or a spa-like caddy, display them. Essentially, make the bathroom look like a hotel or spa—pristine and pampering.
- **18. Kitchen Finishing Touches:** After decluttering and deep cleaning the kitchen, add some clustered décor touches like a wood tray with greenery, candle and ceramic bird, or a cookbook on a stand open to a nice page. These tiny touches add color and life, but keep it minimal. (No one needs to see your dish sponge or knife collection—those should be tucked away.)
- **19. Final Once-Over:** Just before any showing or photos, do a final walkthrough: pick up any stray items, empty all trash cans, close toilet lids, and double-check that every lamp is on and every door (except closets) is open. This last sweep ensures the home is 100% ready to impress.

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- **20. Secure and Leave:** For showings, it's best if sellers are away. So ensure valuables (jewelry, prescriptions, etc.) are secured out of sight, then step out and let the real estate agent take over. A home that's empty of people feels more comfortable for buyers to explore and imagine as their own.
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This **20-Point Home Staging Checklist** is one of my favorite resources because it's simple, powerful, and easy to put into action. It's designed to help you walk through your home with confidence—whether you're prepping for listing photos or welcoming in potential buyers.

Every point on this list is meant to help you make the best possible first impression. You'll notice many of the ideas reflect what I've learned over the years—things like staging with purpose, engaging all the senses, and creating emotional connection points that speak to buyers.

So grab a pen, walk your space, and have fun with it. I believe in you—and I can't wait for you to see the results!

With love and purpose, 

