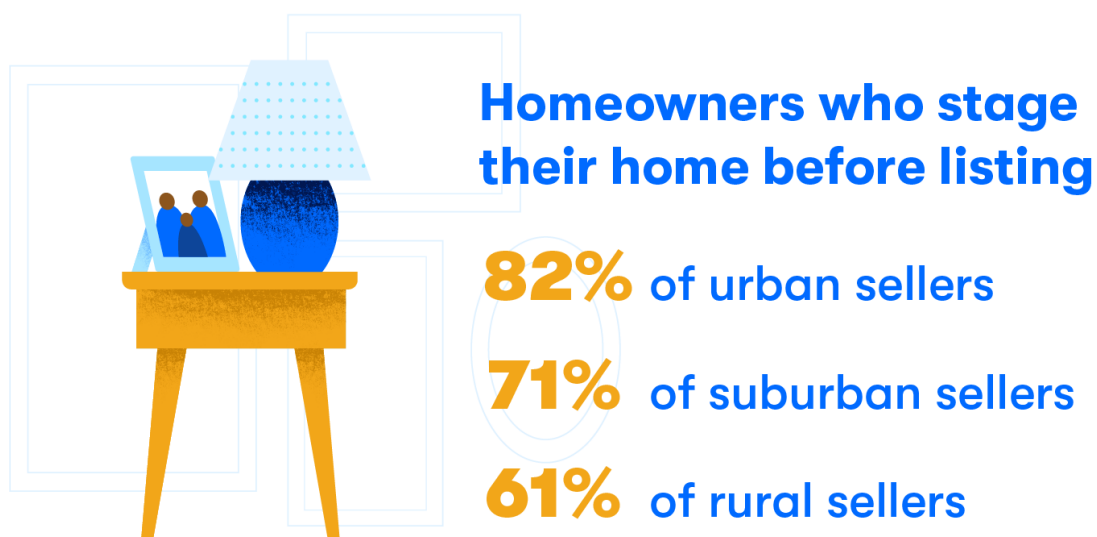


STAGING, STAGING, STAGING...

Why stage a home before selling?

Whether you're going DIY in staging your house to sell or calling in a professional, taking the time to stage your home for potential buyers can be an effective way to make your house stand out against other listings in your area.



Staging your home can help potential buyers picture themselves in the space — a crucial first step in getting them to consider making an offer. And, you'll be in good company among other sellers. According to the [Zillow Group Consumer Housing Trends Report](#), 82 percent of urban sellers, 71 percent of suburban sellers, and 61 percent of rural sellers say that staging their home is one of the top pre-listing activities they complete.

Staging tips for selling your home: Where to start

Declutter: Go room by room, removing the items you won't need between now and moving day. Pay extra attention to cabinets, closets, and pantries — you want to give potential buyers the impression that your home has ample storage. Not sure where to put all your extra stuff? Consider getting a temporary storage unit.

Depersonalize: Remember, potential buyers want to be able to picture themselves calling your house home, and that's hard to do if all they see are family photos, personal items, and

keepsakes. While it might be a bit emotional, take a run through your home and remove the decor items that make your house feel personally yours.

Erase signs of pets: You may love your cat, but potential buyers may not (or they may have an allergy). Make sure to clean thoroughly and remove toys, food dishes, and water bowls.

Deep clean: As your mother would say, “Clean like company is coming.” In fact, you may want to go one step further. Aim to clean to a point where it looks like nobody actually lives in the home: no smudges on the windows, no dust bunnies on the floor, no water marks on the counters. A clean home tells potential buyers that you’ve taken great care of the property.



Staging a house for sale can make all the difference in how long it stays on the market. Photo from Shutterstock.

How to stage your house to sell: 11 best staging ideas

Once you’ve decluttered, depersonalized, hidden all traces of pets, and done a better-than-spring cleaning, you can tackle the actual staging of your home. Read on for the best staging tips.

1. Increase lighting everywhere

Staging a home is no time for mood lighting. One of the first things many potential buyers comment on is the amount of light in a home. Replace any burned-out lightbulbs, swap out for

higher wattage bulbs, clean your windows, open the blinds, and don't forget to turn on the lights before any showing.

2. Create conversational furniture arrangements

Take a look at each room and play around with the arrangement of your furniture to create more conversational spaces. Point loveseats and couches toward each other, which will actually increase the amount of space in rooms. Don't be afraid to mix things completely up. In real life, you'd probably point the couch toward the television. But staging your home for sale isn't about living in it. It's about selling it.

3. Stay neutral for broad appeal

Yes, that bright red accent wall really shows off your personality. But there's only one you, and you've already bought this home once. You need to tone down the colors. Neutrals are your friends. You'll also want to make sure to keep spaces gender-neutral. Your home's new owners won't necessarily use the rooms (or decorate them) the same way you do.

4. Update the finishes

Walk through your home with a critical eye, noticing little maintenance issues like a serious buyer would. It's likely worth a Saturday of work to repaint a room, re-caulk or re-grout, strip wallpaper, or change out dated or worn hardware.

5. Take a look at the exterior

Your home's curb appeal is the ultimate first impression. Mow your lawn, pressure wash any dingy areas, repair chipping paint, plant some flowers, and tidy up any patio furniture.

6. Arrange in odd numbers

From throw pillows to accessories and chairs to artwork, professional stagers and designers swear by decorating in threes, fives, and sevens, which gives some visual interest to otherwise symmetrical spaces.

7. Set the table

It's a nice finishing touch that, again, can help the buyer visualize living there. Holiday dinner party, anyone?

8. Only style with polished accents

For example, only stage your master bath with new bath towels, or none at all. Just say no to your still-drying bath towels from this morning's shower.

9. Make the space appear larger

Add mirrors to reflect light, swap a heavy powder room cabinet for a pedestal sink, or remove a leaf from your huge dining room table.

10. Show value in unusual floor plans

Highlight what makes your home unique and special. Add a reading nook, show the benefit of an extra storage area, or tuck a desk in an unused corner.

11. Use extra rooms deliberately

Never leave a room empty. Instead, make that unused guest room feel usable, staging it as an office, craft room, or guest bedroom — but never all of those things at once!



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