

Of all the many personality traits that combine to become who we are, perhaps the most subjective element of all is taste. It's never so much a matter of what's right or wrong, as it is a matter of what one likes and what one doesn't like. And there's no more honest reflection of who we are than the way we choose to decorate our homes. That's why no professional REALTOR® would ever suggest fundamental changes in your interior decor.

There are a number of suggestions that can enhance any home's appearance. From the buyer's point of view, your kitchen is the most significant room in your home. A bright, attractive kitchen is like a magnet. Make it inviting.

- Your kitchen will look larger if you clear all appliances and containers off the countertops.
- The burners and the oven should be spotless; as well as the hood. It doesn't hurt to replace the filter.
- Repair or replace worn flooring and loose tiles.

Bathrooms can make or break the sale. Consider them a priority.

- The sink, handles and other fixtures should sparkle. Eliminate stains with commercial cleaners. If that doesn't work, replace them.
- Dripping faucets or running toilets are a danger sign. Make sure your sinks and tubs must drain promptly.
- Matching towels, rugs and bathroom sets add appeal.
- A new shower curtain is a very good idea. Leave it open to enlarge the room.
- Thoroughly clean or replace caulking in the tub and shower.
- A basket full of pot pourri gives the bath a fresh and clean fragrance.

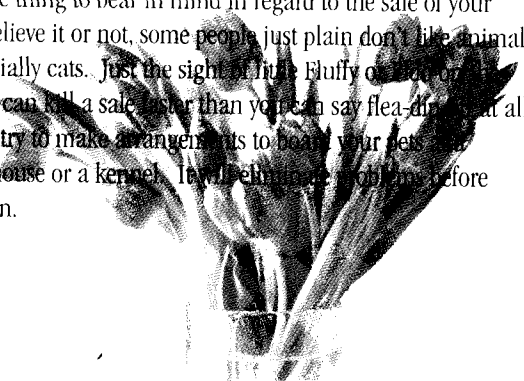
Storage space is a primary concern for buyers. Putting closets and the garage in order gives the impression of spaciousness.

- Discard or store excess clothes and all the other stuff jammed in your closets. An orderly closet appears larger.
- Box and store seasonal clothing.
- Lubricate doors, hinges and drawers with candle wax or a bar of soap.
- Air fresheners eliminate musty odors.
- Clean and organize your garage. Now's a great time to discard everything that's not making the move with you.

A well lit home is an inviting home.

- Even during the light of day, turn on all your lights to add a warm, comfortable glow to every room.
- Sparkling clean windows make rooms feel light and airy.
- Cracked glass and torn screens reflect poorly on the overall impression of your home.
- Make sure all light fixtures and bulbs are spotlessly clean.
- Drapes, curtains and shades should always be open.

One more thing to bear in mind in regard to the sale of your home; believe it or not, some people just plain don't like animals — especially cats. Just the sight of little Bluffy on the premises can kill a sale faster than you can say flea-dip. So, if all possible, try to make arrangements to board your pet at a friend's house or a kennel. It will eliminate a problem before they begin.



Cleaning Around the Kitchen...

Appliances

- To rid yellowing, mix together 1/2 cup bleach, 1/2 cup baking soda and 4 cups warm water. Apply with a sponge and let set 10 minutes. Rinse and dry thoroughly.
- Instead of commercial waxes, shine with rubbing alcohol.
- Use club soda for quick cleanups. It cleans and polishes at the same time.

Can Opener

- Loosen grime with an old toothbrush; then run a paper towel through the cutting process. Presto!

Copper Pots and Utensils

- Fill a spray bottle with vinegar and 3 tablespoons of salt. Spray on discolored copper, let stand, rinse off.

Oven

- An inexpensive overnight oven cleaner: Set oven on "warm" for 20 minutes; then turn off. Put a small dish of ammonia on the top shelf, a large pan of boiling water on the bottom shelf, and close the oven. Next morning, air out the oven and wash off even hard, baked-on grease with ease.

Grease-Clogged Drains

- Pour in a cup of salt and a cup of baking soda, followed by a kettle of boiling water
- Coffee grounds are a no-no! Put them in the trash.

Refrigerator

- A box of baking soda absorbs odors.
- A little vanilla on a paper towel or cotton ball will impart a clean, sweet smell.

Sinks

- To really whiten a porcelain sink, spread paper towels in the bottom and saturate with bleach for an hour or so.
- Remove water spots from stainless steel with rubbing alcohol or white vinegar on a sponge.
- Club soda will shine up stainless steel in a jiffy...bartenders' trick!

For a Sparking Bathroom...

- Glass shower doors shine up in a hurry with white vinegar on a sponge.

- Polish metal fixtures with plain kerosene on a rag. Smell disappears quickly; shine stays on.
- Put shower curtains in the washing machine in warm water with 1/2 cup each of detergent and baking soda, and toss in two large bath towels. Add 1 cup vinegar to the rinse cycle only, and hang the shower curtain immediately without spinning dry or washing out the vinegar.
- Clogged metal shower head? Try boiling it in 1/2 cup vinegar and 1 quart water for 15 minutes. For plastic shower heads, soak in equal parts hot vinegar and hot water.

Slick Trickery for Floors and Carpets...

- Heel marks surrender quickly to kerosene or turpentine on a rag. Or by an ordinary pencil eraser.
- For carpet stains, blot up as much as you can FAST. (Don't rub; this will spread the stain.)
- For fresh stains, plain club soda is amazing. Shaving cream is also good; rinse it with club soda.

Easy Clean up for Furniture and Upholstery

- Shaving cream is a good upholstery cleaner for fresh stains and "ordinary dirt."
- Don't use oil on vinyls to make them shine; it can make the vinyl permanently hard. (Body oil, by the way, has the same effect.) Use a commercial vinyl cleaner or vinegar on a coarse, damp cloth.
- Sagging cane seats tighten up when given a hot water bath and placed in the sun to shrink-dry.
- Vaseline will remove many minor scratches from wood. Apply a generous amount and let it set a while.

All Around the House...

- Remove musty odors from a trunk or from drawers by placing an open coffee can filled with kitty litter inside overnight.
- Try "dry cleaning" your dog with baking soda. Rub well into the coat; then brush out. Goodbye, doggy odor.



The three most important elements of Drive-Up Appeal are landscaping, exterior details and the front door.

Landscaping Should Accent Your Home, Not Hide It.

- Trim shrubs and bushes to the height of the bottom of the windows. Trim any that look scraggly.
- Prune low hanging tree branches high enough to walk under.
- Rake and bag leaves as frequently as needed.
- Water and fertilize the lawn. Repair broken sprinkler heads. Hand water dry spots.
- Mow the lawn twice per week during the summer months. Edge the walks and trim the hedges at least once per month. If you do not have the proper equipment, rent it or pay to have it done.

Exterior Details Are Highlights, So Highlight Them

- Store lawn furniture in disrepair, toys, bikes, and other items from view. You will be moving soon, so discard or store now, if possible.
- Hoses should be coiled or placed inconspicuously when not being used. Store lawn equipment out of sight

- Clean trash cans. Keep out of sight.
- Repair, paint, or remove any fencing that is in disrepair.
- Fresh paint works wonders. Paint the trim or even the entire house if needed. This will probably do more for curb appeal than anything else.
- If the roof leaks, fix it. Remove any and all evidence of leakage by whatever means possible. (Be sure to save the receipts)

Your Front Door Should Say Welcome

- The front door give a vital impression while the REALTOR® and buyer wait for you to answer the bell. Scrub and clean the door or repair it, if necessary.
- Thoroughly clean the door bell. Use a tooth pick, if necessary, or even consider replacing the button. Repair the bell if not working.
- Cleanly sweep the front porch and steps and add plants or pots of seasonal flowers.
- Remove any decorative items that you plan to take with you.
- Keep cars in the garage.
- Remove grease spots from the garage floor and driveway with a commercial cleaner.

