

A buyer's first impression is no longer that special moment when they first pull up to check out your curb appeal. In fact, more often than not, they've already checked out your place from front to back online and for all you know, they may have decided to cruise right by. Most buyers spend weeks stalking perusing online listings, making Pinterest dream boards, texting must-see homes to their agent, and judging. Photos are the curb appeal of the digital age, and those shots have to be good.

Here is a list of ideas and tips on how to get ready for a professional photo shoot.

Inside the Home

1. **De-clutter** as much as possible. Put away toys, clothing, dishes, towels, shoes etc. It's a lot cheaper to put these things away before the photo shoot than to pay to have the photos "photoshopped".
2. **Depersonalize** to a certain degree. Photos of young children and any controversial art (believe me, I've seen it all!) should be put away.
3. Remove any **seasonal/holiday** decorations that can quickly outdate your photos.
4. **Dust and vacuum.**
5. Make all the **beds**, fluff all the pillows, and check the bed skirts.
6. Clean the **kitchen sink** and put away all the dishes.
7. Clear all **kitchen counter tops** and put away toasters, can openers, etc.
8. Clear all **bathroom counter tops** and put away all personal items.
9. Remove all **shampoos, conditioners, body-washes**, etc. from the shower.
10. Put out the **guest towels** and hide all the others.
11. Hide all **trash cans**.
12. Remove all **magnets and decorations** from the refrigerator.
13. If there are **pets**, hide all food/water bowls, pet beds, and pet toys.
14. Put all **toilet seats** and lids down.
15. Replace all burned out **light bulbs**.
16. Consider decorating the tables with your prettiest **place settings**.
17. Consider putting out vases of **fresh flowers**.



Credit: Better Homes & Gardens® Real Estate and Angela Colley



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Outside the Home

1. Have the **lawn trimmed**, leaves raked, bushes and trees pruned.
2. Clean up after any **animal**
3. Put away all garbage **cans**, hoses, garden tools, toys, bikes etc.
4. Hide any “cute” **yard decorations**.
5. In snowy climates, **shovel snow** from walkways, driveways, patios, decks when necessary.
6. If there is a **pool, hot tub, or spa**, uncover and clean.
7. **Replace any broken lighting** on the home, around the landscape, and in the pool.
8. Open the **umbrellas** on any patio sets.
9. When in season, **uncover grills**.
10. Remove any **seasonal/holiday** decorations.
11. Consider adding splashes of **bright colored flowers** to the landscape and in pots.



Right Before the Photographer Arrives

1. Turn on **ALL** interior lights – even lights in furniture cabinets and appliances.
2. Turn off all ceiling fans.
3. Light fireplaces.
4. Open **ALL** blinds, shades, and curtains.
5. Clear all cars and vehicles from the driveway and the street in front of the home.
6. Secure any animals in a safe location, away from all rooms being photographed.

Please place all valuables in a secure location. There will potentially be many people walking through the home, and valuables should be out of site and secure. Safe deposit boxes and wall safes are great for this.

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