



## Real Estate Photography Staging and Preparation

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**Do your real estate photos make viewers say, "I've got to see *this house!*" or do they say, "eh, let's see the next one?"**

When potential buyers see the first photo of your home, that photo should entice them to see the rest. If after having seen all of the photos they are interested in a showing, then the photography has served its purpose. However, no matter how good the *quality* of the photography, if the *subject* of the photography is not up to par, then instead of convincing your viewer(s) to continue looking, they may be more likely to move on to see the next house. If this happens, then the presentation failed. This can easily be avoided by either professional staging or basic home preparation.

Preparing a home for successful photography and showing is an important, yet often overlooked element of the home-selling process. It's surprising how many homes are ill-prepared for photography. Great home photography can be compromised by a home that is not properly staged or prepared for the photography that is ultimately the first glimpse a potential buyer sees of the home. As a photographer, I take all of "my" photos very seriously and personally. When I enter a home to photograph it, I want "my" photos to be the best representation of the home as possible, and unless the home has been professionally staged, I often find myself moving certain items out of view in an effort to ensure the best photography I can provide to the homeowner and realtor. Having to move items adds to the amount of time required for photography, and the last thing I want to be is an inconvenience. It's best for you and for me if I can efficiently photograph the home, which means getting in and out as quickly as possible without compromising the quality of your photography.

If professional staging is not an option, in order to ensure the best possible photography there are still some simple preparations that can easily be accomplished to ensure that the home is presented as a showcase and will greatly enhance the quality of your photography. When I arrive in the home I may move small items and furniture in an effort to obtain the best "staged" appearance. I may also unplug electrical appliances so the power cords don't show. There are, however many things that can be done in advance of my arrival that can really help. You'd be surprised how quickly your eye is drawn to burnt out lights, and that is not what you want people to remember when they look at your photos. Based on my experience I have compiled a list of things that should be done to assure that your home photography is as good as you expect.

## De-cluttering the home prior to photography cannot be over stressed!

You decide: Which makes a better presentation?

**This?**



**or This?**



It's almost hard to believe that this is the same room. The photographer who took the picture on the left did so with the room as-is. I advised the homeowner that removing the toys would make for a much better presentation. They complied without hesitation and the results speak for themselves.

Below are some useful tips and recommendations to help dress your home for success and present it as best as possible... for photography and for showing.

### Exterior Front

- Close Garage Doors
- Ensure that trash cans are out of sight
- Cars should not be parked in the driveway
- Switch on porch lights (but not flood lights), especially for twilight photography
- Blinds or curtains should be drawn/open
- Remove fallen tree limbs and branches from lawn and driveway
- Ensure that missing shutters are replaced



This home has great curb appeal

## All Interior

- Open all blinds and drapes to let the light in
- Stow away personal items such as iPads, books, magazines, toys, etc.
- Remove items such as dog/pet beds
- Switch off ceiling fans and ceiling fan lights
- Hide the power cords for any electrical items
- Replace all burnt-out light bulbs in all light fixtures
- Tilt blinds up about 45 degrees



This room is ready!

## Family Room

- If there is a fireplace, light it
- Set candles in appropriate areas
- Stow away television remote controls and personal items
- Place several books or magazines on the coffee table or end table
- Arrange pillows on the sofa and other seating areas



This home was not professionally staged, but it looks like it was

## Bathrooms

- Remove trash cans
- Remove cleaning instruments
- Lower the toilet seat lid
- Remove personal items such as soaps, toothbrushes, brushes and combs, etc.
- Remove all floor mats
- Ensure that towels are fresh and presented properly



This bathroom is perfectly prepared.

## Bedrooms

- Make sure the beds are neatly made
- Items under the bed should be out of view
- Laundry baskets should not be visible
- Remove all personal items from view, especially on the dresser and nightstand
- Light the fireplace



A great example of a nicely staged master bedroom

## Dining Room

- Set the table or place a centerpiece on the table
- If equipped, switch on the light in the china cabinet
- Straighten the chairs
- Open the curtains and let the light in
- Make it look as if you were having guests over for dinner



A nicely decorated dining room is inviting

## Kitchen

- Remove the trash can from view
- Remove all loose items from countertops
- Remove everything from the refrigerator door
- Set or place a centerpiece on the kitchen table
- Make sure that the sink is clean and free of any dishes, sponges, etc.
- Switch on the stove light



This kitchen is ready for showing

## Yard, Deck Porch, etc.

- Arrange furniture, including cushions, pillows, etc.
- If there is an umbrella, open it
- Remove grill covers; hide propane tanks
- Blow away or rake leaves, cut the lawn, prune and trim shrubbery
- Stow away toys, etc.



This space is ready for entertaining

## Laundry Room

- Ensure that it is clear of all dirty laundry and laundry baskets
- Close all cabinets
- Remove all items from counters (if possible)
- Clean the appliances to ensure they are free of fingerprints and soaps, etc.



This is the laundry room my wife wants!

I hope these tips help you to prepare your home for success. Keep up to date by visiting our blog at [www.jmaurophoto.com/blog](http://www.jmaurophoto.com/blog).

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