

No Cost - Low Cost Ways to Prepare Your Home for Sale

Real estate professionals can have a big impact on updating a home's look by helping clients brainstorm new ideas and by being straightforward about outmoded design elements. The following tips can help get a home up-to-date without breaking the bank.



Move It

Simply rearranging the furniture can reenergize a room. Add and remove furniture, lamps, rugs and accessories from other parts of the house to create a whole new look. Mirrors are particularly useful when it comes to updating a room. Try one out in different rooms to see where it fits best. Even moving a mirror to a different wall can create a more welcoming feel.



Plant It

Houseplants are a generally undervalued design component that can add texture, warmth and color to any room. Just drop plants in their store containers into decorative planters. Small plants can be moved easily and regrouped to change a room's look, while larger ones make a statement on their own. Group plants of differing heights, textures and color for the most dramatic effect. Jettison the scraggly specimens, it's important to have plants that are well maintained and in top form.



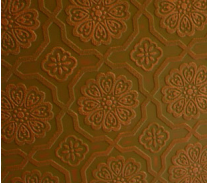
Paint It

Paint is one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to make a substantial change. Use dramatic colors in powder rooms and dining rooms and more neutral colors in living spaces. When selecting colors, be sure to ask, "What is the feeling I am trying to evoke?" And always, do a test before you paint the whole room.



Organize It

"Clutter just happens, so neaten up." There are a variety of organizing tools to make a space feel polished while maintaining utility. Hooks and shelves inside the door give people a place to hang coats and keys, while canvas bins or natural baskets help contain magazines and mail. "Just a row of hooks pre-attached on a board is so easy to install." And shelves are a great way to neatly display collectibles.



Cover It

Have a banged-up wall? It may be easy to camouflage. Paintable wallpaper (available for as little as \$16/roll from Creative Wallcovering) will smooth out an uneven wall or hide minor dents and dings. Adventurous homeowners can even try a simple two-step painting process for a more complex finish. Caution: your intent should never be to mislead buyers; be sure to disclose flaws that would affect home value.



Replace It

Cabinet handles, switch plates and other small pieces of housing hardware can update a home for just a few dollars a piece. Scan each room to see what looks worn or outdated and then replace it. Inexpensive quick connect faucets can make upgrading the look of your bathroom a snap. Just be sure to measure before you go to the store. Some sinks are drilled for an eight-inch spread, others are four inches. “And don’t forget the toilet seat.” Fresh towels and a new toilet seat go a long way toward making a bathroom feel clean and new.



Light It

Lighting can have a major impact on a home’s look and feel. Whether a room seems dark or too bright and harsh, try “layering” the lighting by adding accent pendants and lamps. Make sure they have independent controls, so that you can turn them off and on at will. Light is a mood setter. Add dimmers in the dining room, bathrooms, kitchen and even the hallways for less than \$4/each. Then adjust the lighting to create the mood you want.



Clean It

Turn a critical eye to the flooring to make sure it’s up to snuff. Scrub grout and seal natural stone. Rub out scratches and nicks on wood floors with scratch cover. “Get down on your hands and knees and detail the floors.” “It takes a little elbow grease, but the results are well worth it.” Vinyl flooring is a bit harder to spruce up but usually can be replaced easily and inexpensively.