

How to Declutter Your Home Before an Open House

When potential buyers come to your open house, they want to see bright, open spaces. No one wants to see crammed closets or cabinets full of clutter. Looking around and wondering how to declutter your home? If you have an open house on the horizon, you're going to want to dive in immediately.

When it's time to sell your home, editing your decor will help make the sale. Buyers need to picture themselves living in your home, and they can't do that if your stuff is crammed into every corner. Even if your house is dust-free and your fixtures are sparkling, your personal clutter can be a potential turnoff to buyers.

Hiring someone to stage your home will help, but before a stager even enters your home, see how much of your clutter you can clear on your own. As always, follow the rule of three piles—keep, donate, and throw away.

Time allotted: 2-3 Weekends

If you have enough time for a yard sale, set aside sellable items, but remember that selling your house is top priority and budget your time accordingly. Donating can save you some time, because some charities will come right to your door and haul your old stuff away. For stuff you need to keep, consider renting a storage unit and clearing everything out to make your house clutter free.

How to declutter your home

1. Furniture: Pare down the pieces in your living areas so your rooms have an open flow.
2. Entry: Clear out any shoes, coats, umbrellas and other outdoor items from your foyer or mudroom.
3. Equipment: Put exercise equipment in storage or in the garage.
4. Bookshelves: Edit your shelves so that you have a neat, orderly space with books and perhaps a few decorative items. Don't have overflowing, sagging shelving units weighing you down.
5. Periodicals: Recycle old newspapers and magazines clogging up your coffee tables and nightstands.
6. Photos: Take down any personal photos. Buyers need to imagine pictures of their own family on the walls, tables and shelves.

7. Cables and cords: Organize the cords for your televisions, computers, and other electronics so that they're not hanging out all over the place.
8. Plants: Toss sickly looking plants and keep only a few healthy ones on display. If you have a lot of greenery in your home, edit your plants and put some in the backyard.
9. Kitchen counters: Remove everything from your kitchen countertops, keeping only essentials like a toaster and microwave. Decorate sparingly—buyers need to envision the kitchen without your stuff all over the counters. Clear magnets, coupons and children's artwork from the refrigerator.
10. Cabinets and pantry: Arrange the shelves neatly with items and labels pointed in the same direction.
11. Bedrooms: Make sure the beds are made and the floors are clean.
12. Nightstands: Put away tissues, medicines and magazines and just keep lamps and maybe a book or two.
13. Closets: Organize your closets so they aren't overflowing with clothes.
14. Bathrooms: Put all toiletries and medications in a cabinet while your house is being shown. Spruce your bathrooms up with fresh soaps and towels.

Follow these tips, and you'll wow potential buyers at your open house!