

Preparing Your Home for Photos

It would come as no surprise to anyone that quality photos are a key component to attracting potential buyers to your home. When browsing property listings, buyers tend to go directly to the photos first. In that brief moment, you want to catch the attention of the buyer, and hopefully turn that on-line exposure into a possible sales lead. Obviously the photographer plays a role in that, but your role as a home owner is equally important. Below are a few helpful tips in preparing your home for the photo shoot:

Declutter and tidy: Let's face it, we all accumulate "stuff" over the years, some of which we use every day. But there are also many things we could stash away for a while, and even some items we no longer need which we could give away, sell, or dispose of. In some cases, it might even be helpful to store some items off-site. Your Realtor can advise you on that. Prior to the day of the photo shoot, de-clutter and tidy up as much as you can. As a rule, we do not open closets for the photos, except for walk-in closets. Those are considered a feature, so it's usually a good idea to showcase them.



Minor repairs and touch-ups: Scuffs and damage on drywall and trim will show up in photos. Fill holes and touch up where possible.

Paint: A fresh coat of paint is one of the most effective and least costly ways to rejuvenate a tired looking room. Lighter colours photograph better than darker colours, and more neutral colours allow a potential buyer to imagine their own furnishings and possessions in that room regardless of their style.

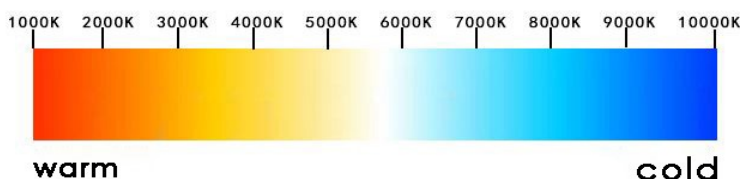
Lighting: Photography by definition is the capture of light. So it goes without saying that lighting is important. Depending on the size of your windows and the colour of your walls and other surfaces, a lot of that light may come from outside, but we often turn on lamps and light fixtures as well for the photos, depending on the room and the type of lighting. Here are a few important lighting tips:

Before the day of the shoot, check all your lights and make sure they are working. This includes lamps as well as fixtures. In the kitchen, this would also include under cabinet lights and range hood lights if you have them.

If you are considering upgrading some fixtures, or replacing broken ones, directional lighting such as track lights and pot lights look best in photos. For example, if you have an ordinary dome light as your main light source in the kitchen, consider replacing it with a track light. Under cabinet lights in the kitchen can also add a dramatic effect, and will showcase a well lit workspace. LED light strips are easy to install and plug directly into a standard receptacle. It is important, however, to have a light rail under the cabinet to hide the lights from view.



Colour temperature. The colour temperature is the rating that determines how warm or how cool the light appears. On the warm end of the scale, lights have a yellow or orange hue, while on the cool end of the scale they appear more white or even a little blue. Colour temperature is rated in degrees Kelvin, usually stated simply as 'K'. A lower K rating represents warmer colours, while a higher K rating represents cooler colours.



Colour *temperature* (cont'd). So what rating is best for photos? It depends. If your walls are earth tones such as beiges, yellows, and oranges, then warmer lights in the range of 2500 – 3000K will photograph well. However, if your walls are cooler colours such as blue or grey, then you want lights that are 3000K or higher. If you use warm lights with cool walls, or vice versa, colours may clash, and walls may even appear to be a different colour. The good news is that 3000K tends to be a good colour temperature for nearly ALL situations.

TIP: Costco carries 3000K LED bulbs in 12 packs (of course) for a reasonable price. It is also important to try and avoid lights with drastically different colour temperatures in the same room. Some fixtures with permanent LED's even have adjustable colour temperature!



Window coverings: The more light the better! We often open drapes, blinds and shades to let in as much natural light as possible. They should also be in good repair. Windows are usually the focal point of the room, so visibly damaged window coverings will stand out. Consider replacing them, or even removing them altogether if feasible.

Pets: In general, it is best to put away pet related items, such as dog beds and litter boxes for the photos. These items can be a distraction in the photos, and while we all love our pets, some buyers who may have pet allergies or sensitivities may be deterred by seeing evidence of pets living in the home.

The yard: We usually capture all sides of the house and all outdoor spaces. Not all photos will necessarily be posted on the listing, but everything should be tidied up as much as possible for the shoot. We recommend mowing the lawn the same day or within a day or so of the shoot, especially in the Spring when weeds are most active. Vehicles should also be moved, if possible.

Presented courtesy of:
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