

Once your home goes on the market, real estate agents may call to show your home anytime, even if you've listed preferred showing times in the instructions. Keeping your home in showtime condition can be challenging, especially if you have children and pets. Here are some pointers for presenting your home in the best light

Showings & Open House Checklist

- Eliminate clutter: The less cluttered your home, the better it shows. If you have a lot of knick-knacks, collections, or family mementos, consider renting a portable storage unit, which can be stored until it's time to deliver it to your new home.
- Keep, donate, throw away: If you have time before you go on the market, sort unwanted belongings into one of these three baskets. You'll receive more in tax benefits for your donations than pennies on the dollar at a garage sale. It's faster, more efficient and you'll help more people.
- Remove temptations: Take valuable jewelry and collectibles to a safety deposit box, a safe, or store them in a secure location. Also secure your prescription medicine and private financial documents.
- Remove breakables: Figurines, china, crystal and other breakables should be packed and put away in the garage or storage.
- Be hospitable: You want your home to look like a home. Open the blinds, turn on the lights, and make visitors feel welcomed.
- Have a family plan of action: When a showing happens at an inconvenient time, get the family engaged. Everyone can pitch in to tidy up in a hurry: pick up glasses, plates, clothing, and anything else left lying about.
- Get in the habit: Wash dishes immediately after meals. Clean off countertops. Make beds in the morning. Keep pet toys and beds washed and smelling fresh.
- Clean out the garage and attic: Buyers want to see what kind of storage there is.

The Essential Five-minute Clean-up for Showings

Everyone gets a basket and cleans up clutter. Check for hazards, like toys left on the floor. Make sure all toys, including bicycles, are put away.

- Put pets in daycare, sleep cages or take them with you: In the listing instructions, there should be a warning if there is a big dog on premises. Buyers with allergies also may appreciate knowing in advance if you have pets.
- Turn on lights: Open the drapes, turn on lights so buyers can really see. **Very important with the shorter days - all lights in the home on, and put a flashlight by the back door so the rear yard can be seen**
- Give the buyer privacy: The buyer cannot come to your home without being accompanied by an agent. They will be more comfortable touring the home without your presence.