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Preparing your home for photographs – A homeowner's guide

Most buyers search online, so the photographs are the first impression they get. Setting the scene is vital so the images capture your home at its best and maximise its appeal. Here is a quick guide to help you prepare for the photographer.

General Hints

This applies to all rooms of the house.

Clean	A clean house will sparkle.
De-clutter	A cluttered home will distract the buyer's attention from the important stuff. Put away any unnecessary clutter like boxes, containers, toys and clothes. Take the memorabilia off the fridge door. Contrary to popular belief, items can't be 'photoshopped out' later.
Lighting	Turn on all the overhead lights and any lamps in rooms. Make sure and replace any bulbs that no longer work.
Flowers	A bunch of fresh flowers can really help to brighten up any room. These can easily be moved to appear in more than one room.
Window Blinds	Open the blinds to get as much natural light in as possible.
Pictures and Art	Straighten the pictures and art on the walls and replace any personal pictures that you do not want to be published.
Pets	Remove the pet bowls and beds from view. Pay special attention to areas that gather pet hair.

Exterior

This will be the first photo in the range, so it needs to be good. Give your home some 'Kerb Appeal' by doing the following:

Tidy	Put away the hose and tidy up any toys and equipment. Remove or hide the bins.
Landscaping	Mow the lawn and weed the garden. Invest in window boxes and replant empty pots.
House/garage/shed	Paint if necessary. Clean the windows.
Car	Park the car somewhere else and keep the drive empty.

Special features If your home has any special features like a pond, statue or pergola, give them a clean and spruce them up so they can be shown off.

Kitchen

The focal point of the home. The kitchen should look bare, clean and clutter free.

Clear worktops Only have a maximum of one or two appliances visible. Try and show as much worktop space as possible to give the illusion of more space.

De-clutter Clear the front of the fridge, remove any dishes and utensils from view.

Appliances Clean down the cooker, hob and microwave and around the dishwasher. These appliances attract dirt the most. Hide the bin and brush.

Kitchen Dining Straighten any chairs and space evenly. Remove high chairs.

Dining/Living Rooms

These areas should convey space where possible.

Polish Polish any table-tops and coffee tables.

Chairs Straighten dining chairs and space evenly. Plump up cushions and arrange living room furniture.

De-clutter Remove any everyday living objects like remote controls and magazines. Keep ornaments to a minimum. Clear the hearth and neaten the fireplace.

TV Turn the TV off and polish the screen.

Bedrooms

Setting the scene for a tranquil night's sleep.

Make Beds Get your best sheets on the bed and declutter under the bed. Press and straighten any linens and get rid of the creases.

Put away clothes Clear any clothes away and close wardrobe doors. Hide any laundry.

Curtains Draw the curtains and blinds to let in as much natural light as possible.

Bedside cabinets Clear the clutter and polish. Turn on the bedside lamps. Store away any charging cables, phones, tablets and reading material.

Kids Rooms Tidy the toys away where possible and keep the posters to a minimum. These areas are impossible to clear completely but should convey as much space as possible. Its OK to have the favourite teddy bear on top of the bed.

Bathrooms

Go for the hotel bathroom look.

Toilet seats These should be down and clean.

Toiletries Hide any toiletries including toothbrushes, paste, shampoos etc from view.

Towels Remove any old towels and facecloths. Replace with clean unused towels.

Clean Give the shower doors and taps a good shine. Bleach off any mould that has accumulated.

Floor Mats Get rid of any floor mats to show as much flooring as possible.

Bath toys Hide the bath toys out of sight.

Well done, your home looks fantastic and you are now ready for the photographer. Don't be afraid to tell the photographer about any interesting features in your home that should be included in the photographs.