

10 WAYS TO PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR AN OPEN HOUSE

1. Clean, clean, clean. Or hire a cleaning service. A spotlessly clean home is essential; dirt will turn off a prospect faster than anything.
 2. Lock up your valuables, jewelry, and money. Although your real estate agent will be on site during the open house, it's impossible to watch everyone all the time.
 3. Turn on all the lights. Even in the daytime, incandescent lights add sparkle.
 4. Send your pets to a neighbor or take them outside. If that's not possible, crate them or confine them to one room (a basement or bath), and let the agent know where to find them.
 5. Add a new shower curtain, fresh towels, and new guest soaps to every bath.
 6. Buy a fresh doormat. Set the dining table with pretty dishes and candles. Put fresh or silk flower arrangements in principal rooms for a touch of color.
 7. Put away kitchen appliances and personal bathroom items to give the illusion of more counter space.
 8. Lay a fire in the fireplace. Or put a basket of flowers or a candle stack there if it's not in use.
 9. Depersonalize the rooms by putting away family photos, mementos, and distinctive artwork.
 10. Mow your lawn, and be sure toys and yard equipment are put away. Turn on the sprinklers for 30 minutes to make the lawn sparkle.
- * Don't forget to leave. It's awkward for prospective buyers to look in your closets and express their opinions of your home with you there.