



### **5 Things to Do Before You sell**

1. Get estimates from a reliable repair person on items that need to be replaced soon, such as a roof or worn carpeting, for example. This way, buyers will have a better sense of how much these needed repairs will affect their costs.
2. Have a termite inspection to prove to buyers that the property is not infested.
3. Get a pre-sale home inspection so you'll be able to make repairs before buyers become concerned and cancel a contract.
4. Gather together warranties and guarantees on the furnace, appliances, and other items that will remain with the house.
5. Fill out a disclosure form provided by your sales associate. Take the time to be sure that you don't forget problems, however minor, that might create liability for you after the sale.

### **10 Ways to Make your House More Salable**

1. Get rid of clutter. Throw out or file stacks of newspapers and magazines. Pack away most of your small decorative items. Store out-of-season clothing to make closets seem roomier. Clean out the garage.
2. Wash your windows and screens to let more light into the interior.
3. Keep everything extra clean. Wash fingerprints from light switch plates. Mop and wax floors. Clean the stove and refrigerator. A clean house makes a better first impression and convinces buyers that the home has been well cared for.
4. Get rid of smells. Clean carpeting and drapes to eliminate cooking odors, smoke, and pet smells. Open the windows.
5. Put higher wattage bulbs in light sockets to make rooms seem brighter, especially basements and other dark rooms. Replace any burnt-out bulbs.
6. Make minor repairs that can create a bad impression. Small problems, such as sticky doors, torn screens, cracked caulking, or a dripping faucet, may seem trivial, but they'll give buyers the impression that the house isn't well maintained.



7. Tidy your yard. Cut the grass, rake the leaves, trim the bushes, and edge the walks. Put a pot or two of bright flowers near the entryway.
8. Patch holes in your driveway and reapply sealant, if applicable.
9. Clean your gutters.
10. Polish your front doorknob and door numbers.

### **20 Low-Cost Ways to Spruce Up Your Home**

Make your home more appealing for potential buyers with these quick and easy tips.

1. Trim bushes so they don't block windows and cut down on light.
2. Buy a new doormat.
3. Put a pot of bright flowers (or a small evergreen in winter) on your porch.
4. Put new doorknobs on your doors.
5. Put a fresh coating on your driveway.
6. Edge the grass around walks and trees.
7. Keep your garden tools out of site.
8. Be sure kids put away their toys.
9. Buy a new mailbox.
10. Upgrade the outside lighting.
11. Use warm, incandescent light bulbs for a homey feel.
12. Polish or replace your house numbers.
13. Clean your gutters.
14. Put out potpourri or burn scented candles.
15. Buy new pillows for the sofa.



16. Buy a flowering plant and put it in a window you pass by frequently.
17. Make a centerpiece for your table with fruit or artificial flowers.
18. Replace heavy curtains with sheer ones that let in more light.
19. Buy new towels.
20. Put a seasonal wreath on your door.

### **5 Ways to Speed Up Your Sale**

1. Price it right. Set a price at the lower end of your property's realistic price range.
2. Get your house market-ready for at least two weeks before you begin showing it.
3. Be flexible about showings. It's often disruptive to have a house ready to show on the spur of the moment, but the more often someone can see your home, the sooner you'll find a seller.
4. Be ready for the offers. Decide in advance what price and terms you'll find acceptable.
5. Don't refuse to drop the price. If your home has been on the market for more than 30 days without an offer, be prepared to lower your asking price.

### **What is Appraised Value?**

It's an objective opinion of value, but it's not an exact science so appraisals may differ.

For buying and selling purposes, appraisals are usually based on market value – what the property could probably be sold for. Other types of value include insurance value, replacement value, and assessed value for property tax purposes.

Appraised value is not a constant number. Changes in market conditions can dramatically alter appraised value.

Appraised value doesn't consider special considerations, like the need to sell rapidly.

Lenders usually use either the appraised value or the sale price, whichever is less, to determine the amount of the mortgage they will offer.

### **7 Terms to Watch for in a Purchase Contract**



1. The closing date. See if the date the buyer wants to take title is reasonable for you.
2. Date of possession. See if the date the buyer wants to move in is reasonable for you.
3. The earnest money. Look for the largest earnest-money deposit possible, since it is forfeited if the buyer backs out, a large deposit is usually a good indication of a sincere buyer.
4. Fixtures and personal property. Check the list of items that the buyer expects to remain with the property and be sure it's acceptable.
5. Repairs. Determine what the requested repairs will cost and whether you're willing to do the work or would rather lower the price by that amount.
6. Contingencies. See what other factors the buyer wants met before the contract is final – inspections, selling a home, obtaining a mortgage, review of the contract by an attorney. Set time limits on contingencies so that they won't drag on and keep your sale from becoming final.
7. The contract expiration date. See how long you have to make a decision on the offer.

### **Moving Tips for Sellers**

1. Give your forwarding address to the post office, usually two to four weeks ahead of the move.
2. Notify your credit card companies, magazine subscriptions, and bank of the change of address.
3. Develop a list of friends, relatives, and business colleagues who need to be notified of the move.
4. Arrange to have utilities disconnected at your old home and connected at your new one.
5. Cancel the newspaper.
6. Check insurance coverage for moved items. Usually movers only cover what they pack.
7. Clean out appliances and prepare them for moving, if applicable.
  
8. Note the weight of the goods you'll have moved, since long-distance moves are usually billed according to weight. Watch for movers that use excessive padding to add weight.



9. Check with your condo or co-op about restrictions on using the elevator or particular exits.
10. Have a "first open" box with the things you'll need most—toilet paper, soap, trash bags, scissors, hammer, screwdriver, pencils and paper, cups and plates, water, snacks, and toothpaste.

**Plus, if you're moving out of town:**

1. Get copies of medical and dental records and prescriptions for your family and your pets.
2. Get copies of children's school records for transfer.
3. Ask friends for introductions to anyone they know in your new neighborhood.
4. Consider special car needs for pets when traveling.
5. Let a friend or relative know your route.
6. Carry traveler's checks or an ATM card for ready cash until you can open a bank account.
7. Empty your safety deposit box.
8. Put plants in boxes with holes for air circulation if you're moving in cold weather.

**Tips for Packing Like a Pro**

1. Develop a master "to do" list so you won't forget something critical.
2. Sort and get rid of things you no longer want or need. Have a garage sale, donate to a charity, or recycle.
3. Don't throw out everything. If your inclination is to just toss it, ask yourself how frequently you use an item and how you'd feel if you no longer had it.
4. Pack like items together. Put toys with toys, kitchen utensils with kitchen utensils.
5. Decide what if anything you plan to move yourself. Precious items, such as family photos, valuable breakables, or must-haves during the move, should probably stay with you.
6. Use the right box for the item. Loose items encourage breakage.



7. Put heavy items in small boxes so they're easier to lift. Keep weight under 50 lbs. if possible.
8. Don't over-pack boxes and increase the chances they will break.
9. Wrap every fragile item separately and pad bottom and sides of boxes.
10. Label every box on all sides. You never know how they'll be stacked and you don't want to have to move other boxes aside to find out what's there.
11. Use color-coded labels to indicate which room each item should go in. Color-code a floor plan for your new house to help movers.
12. Keep your moving documents together, including phone numbers, driver's name, and van number. Also keep your address book handy.
13. Back up your computer files before moving your computer.
14. Inspect each box and all furniture for damage as soon as it arrives.
15. Remember, most movers won't take plants.

### **7 Items to Have on Hand for the New Owners**

1. Owner's manuals for items left in the house.
2. Warranties for any items left in the house.
3. A list of local service providers—the best dry cleaner, yard service, etc.
4. Garage door opener.
5. Extra sets of house keys.
6. Code to burglar alarm and phone number of monitoring service if not discontinued.
7. Turn on the sprinklers for 30 minutes to make the lawn sparkle.

### **What You'll Net at Closing**

To find out how much money you'll net from your house, add up your closing costs and subtract them from the sale price of the house.



<b><i>Closing Costs for Sellers</i></b>	
Mortgage payoff and outstanding interest	
Prorations for real estate taxes	
Prorations for utility bills, condo dues, and other items paid in arrears	
Closing fees charged by closing specialist	
Title policy fee	
Home inspections	
Attorney's fees	
Survey charge	
Transfer tax or other government registration fees	
Brokerage commission	
<b><i>Total</i></b>	