
Uncluttering the House

Even after a few years of living in the same home, clutter collects in such a way that may not be evident to the homeowner. However, it does affect the way buyers see the home, even if you do not realize it.

Clutter collects on shelves, counter tops, drawers, closets, garages, attics, and basements. You want as much open clear space as possible, so every extra little thing needs to be cleared away.

Take a step back and pretend you are a buyer. Let a friend help point out areas of clutter, as long as you can accept their views without getting defensive. Let your real estate agent help you, too

Kitchen Clutter

The kitchen is a good place to start removing clutter, because it is an easy place to start. Potential homebuyers will open all your cabinets and drawers, especially in the kitchen. They want to be sure there is enough room for their "stuff." If your kitchen cabinets, pantries, and drawers look jammed full, it sends a negative message to the buyer. You want to have as much "open space" as possible.

First, get everything off the counters. Everything. Even the toaster. Put the toaster in a cabinet and take it out when you use it. Find a place where you can store everything in cabinets and drawers.

Of course, you may notice that you do not have enough cabinet and drawer space to put everything away. If you have a "junk drawer," get rid of the junk. The dishes, pots and pans that rarely get used? Put them in a box and put that box in storage.

If you have a large amount of foodstuffs crammed into the shelves or pantry, begin using them – especially canned goods. Canned goods are heavy and you don't want to be lugging them to a new house, anyway – or paying a mover to do so. Let what you have on the shelves determine your menus, and use up as much as you can. Eat yourself out of the house.

Beneath the sink is very critical, too. Make sure the area beneath the sink is as empty as possible, removing all extra cleaning supplies. You should scrub the area down as well, and determine if there are any tell-tale signs of water leaks that may cause a homebuyer to hesitate in buying your home.

Closet Clutter

Closets are great for accumulating clutter, though you may not think of it as clutter. We are talking about extra clothes and shoes – things you rarely wear but cannot bear to be without. Do without these items for a couple of months by putting them in a box, because these items can make your closets look "crammed full." Sometimes there are shoeboxes full of "stuff" or other accumulated personal items, too. Like with other mementos and knick-knacks, you need to store these away.

Furniture Clutter

Many people have too much furniture in certain rooms – not too much for your own personal living needs – but too much to give the impression of open space that a homebuyer would like to see. You may want to tour some builders' models to see how they place furniture in the model homes. Observe how they place furniture in the models so you get some ideas on what to remove and what to leave in your house.

Storage Area Clutter

Basements, garages, attics, and sheds not only accumulate clutter, junk builds up in these storage areas. They should be as empty as possible so that buyers can imagine what they would do with the space. Throw the junk away. Remove anything that is not essential and take it to the storage area. Better yet, have a garage sale.