



## How To Prepare Your Listing For Photographs

I've photographed hundreds of listings and have found that the more the listing has been prepped before my arrival, the better the photos come out.

There's an old saying in photography: *If you shoot a banana, you get a banana*. In other words; I can't make a messy, cluttered room look somehow not messy or not cluttered.



**Not a pineapple.**

First of all, If you can possibly afford a professional stager, by all means do it! They are totally worth it. Your listing will look so much better, likely sell for more, and will definitely look better in photos. I can refer you to some of my favorites.

## Think Like A Buyer

If you don't take my advice and hire a stager, then let me give you some basic self-staging pointers:

- Try to make your listing look like a clean, furnished hotel (or bed & breakfast). It should be stylish, but generic. The goal is to allow the buyers to imagine living there. Don't make this fantasy more difficult by having lots of personal family photos out, and don't make the fantasy a nightmare by having cluttered messy rooms.
- Remember that people are going to be looking at rooms from the doorways they come through, and it is important to arrange furniture and such so that the room looks great from those angles. I am also going to shoot either from that same doorway, or from the corner of the room where I capture the MOST WINDOWS. Your photographer usually want to get as many windows as they can in the shot. for doorways or closet doors, I usually want to get as many windows as I can in the shot.



## Clear Your Clutter!

**This is *the #1 most important thing* for showing off your listing:**

Get all knickknacks, stacks of paper, remote controls, extraneous furniture, family photos, pet stuff & toys out of sight. NOT under your bed. I can often see under beds when I photograph bedrooms, and it's not a pretty sight when there's a yard sale stuffed underneath. Store it all in a closet, in the garage (if we aren't photographing it), or sacrifice a room for storage that won't be photographed.



Again, your goal is to make the house (or condo) look like a clean, tastefully arranged hotel. Hide power cords and cables as much as you can. Make sure all the light switch plates and power outlet plates are straight and intact. If you have child-proof latches on cupboards and drawers, remove them for the photos if it's not too difficult. Make your beds look like you see in magazines. The pillows should be big and fluffy and the bed cover has to be perfect. Hide all digital do-dads and cords around the bed. A tissue box is not a staging prop. Get it out of sight.

**Remember: LESS IS MORE!**

### **Curb Appeal**

The view of the front of your listing is very important. Your goal is to make the front of the house appealing enough that buyers will want to see more. If you can afford it, bring in a landscaper who will make your property look stellar and save you a backache.

If you are going to do it yourself, here's a short list of tasks:

- Pull weeds, trim overgrown shrubs and low-hanging tree branches. Rake and/or mow the lawn. Put away garden hoses. Hide the garbage cans, yard tools, dead plants, empty pots and any other yard clutter. Lay down wood chips wherever there is dirt showing, or better yet, plant some beautiful new plants there. Is your back sore yet? I told you to hire a landscaper didn't I?
- Before I arrive for photos, move all vehicles out of the driveway, and preferably not directly in front of your house. Clean up the front porch and stairs. Sweep the decks and patios. Wipe off the outdoor furniture and put the nice cushions on them.



### Let the light in

Before your photographer arrives, turn on every single light in the house, don't forget the surface lights on your stove and under your cupboards. If any lights are burned out, replace them with new bulbs. Open all curtains and blinds (unless there is a very unappealing view out the window you don't want to highlight in the photos). Turn off the ceiling fans.



## Flowers and fruit and artsy books

Bring some color, freshness and serenity to your listing by staging a few nice flower arrangements on the dining room table, in a corner of the living room, and in a bedroom or large bathroom. A bowl of apples or lemons or oranges in the kitchen always looks nice. If you have a nice attractive coffee table book, preferably architectural or home décor in theme, set it on (you guessed it) your coffee table. Hide the Maxim and People magazines. See all those books on your overfilled bookshelf? Now take half of them out (the bright, clashing, odd-sized ones) and put them in a box. Ahh, that's better isn't it?



## Bathrooms

Many bathrooms are small, narrow and difficult to photograph. Hide all your personal bath and shower stuff and bathroom trashcans. Put on a new roll of toilet paper. Neatly hang a few color complementary towels and hand towels. If you have room, put a nice looking candle or small plant next to the sink or bathtub. Once again, make it look like a nice, clean, cozy hotel bathroom.



## What you don't have to worry about

Although you are obviously going to want to do a big cleaning before your open house, for photographic purposes, you don't have to fret too much about dusty furniture or floors, or dirty windows. The camera is very forgiving when it comes to dirty windows and wood floors, but buyers won't be, so be sure to clean your windows and floors before your open house.



This is by no means a complete list of everything you'll have to do, it's a photographer's wish list to get you started. If you don't do these things before I arrive, your photos won't be what they could be. Though I do use photoshop, I'm not a magician. If I photograph a cluttered, dark room, that's what you're going to get. If you spend the time doing the things suggested on this list, you are going to get much better images and many more potential buyers.

**Hey Agents!**



This last tip is specifically for you.

If you have asked your sellers to do the things on this list, fantastic! If you haven't made sure that they have actually done them before I arrive, then I'm either going to charge you a cancellation fee and reschedule for when they are ready, or I'm going to just go ahead and do the best I can under the circumstances. In the latter case, there's a good chance you won't be thrilled with the results. I'm not a stager, a landscaper, nor a stylist. The reason they get paid well for what they do is because it takes skill and experience, it's a lot of work, and it's time-consuming. Most photographers are happy to move and adjust things here and there as they go, but they are there to take excellent photos, not prep your listing for the open house. So please, please, pretty please...

**MAKE SURE THE LISTING IS READY FOR PHOTOS BEFORE THE PHOTOGRAPHER ARRIVES.**

If your sellers are still living at the house when your photographer is scheduled to photograph it and you are not absolutely certain that they have the listing CAMERA-READY, then I suggest you get there at least an hour ahead of me and make sure. If it's not ready and you aren't sure you can get it ready by the time I arrive, call me ASAP and schedule a reshoot. If you are lucky, you'll catch me in a good mood and I won't charge you the \$50.00 cancellation fee. If I am not notified that the house isn't ready before I arrive, it's a definite \$50 cancellation fee plus any travel charges that may apply. If you want me to stay and help prepare the listing for an hour, I'd be happy to...for an additional \$50, plus the cancellation fee.

**Whew!**

If you've done the things on this list, congratulations! It wasn't easy, but now that you are looking

around, I bet you are surprised by how much bigger, brighter, and “happier” your place feels. Sorry, it’s too late to change your mind. You are selling this listing and you are going to get top dollar for it thanks to your hard work (and your agent, stagers, landscapers and photographer). Now just stay out of sight while the photographer goes to work photographing your listing.



This is by no means a complete list of everything you'll have to do, it's a photographer's wish list to get you started. If you don't do these things before I arrive, your photos won't be as good, plain and simple. If you spend the time doing the things suggested on this list, you are going to get much better images and a lot more views by potential buyers.

If you know any clients or agents who may benefit from these pointers, please feel free to forward this list to them. And if you've used my photographic services before, please recommend me!

---

The summer is my busiest time, so be sure to [schedule your photo shoot](#) with me as soon as you can. As long as you give me a day's notice, I don't charge any cancellation fees.

Greg White  
Seattle Home Photography  
206-302-9778  
[info@seattlehomephotography.com](mailto:info@seattlehomephotography.com)

[www.SeattleHomePhotography.com](http://www.SeattleHomePhotography.com)