

5 Ways to Declutter the Family Home Before Listing

Preparing a longtime family home for sale can be a big, emotional undertaking. How do you sort through cherished things that your family has accumulated over decades? Here are 5 areas to get you started.

1. PITCH THE PAPER

We often become "clutter blind" to the accumulation of items in our homes, and paper is one of the biggest offenders. Move from room to room and gather all the paper items—unsorted mail, documents, bills, magazines, greeting cards, invitations, newspapers, etc. Sort them into three piles: keep, shred, and recycle. File the important items, shred anything with personal information, and recycle the rest.

2. REMOVE THE EXTRA FURNITURE

Overcrowded rooms can feel small and uninviting to potential buyers. Remove all non-essential furniture and any pieces that are threadbare, excessively worn, or don't fit properly in the space. It's better to have less and use your best pieces to stage your home.

3. DEPERSONALIZE THE DÉCOR

Your home likely features your favorite collections, photographs, children's artwork, postcards, and memorabilia. These items, while meaningful to you, can make it difficult for buyers to envision themselves living in the space. Pack them away and opt for clean, simple décor that highlights your home's best features without overwhelming potential buyers.



4. CLEAR THE KITCHEN

A clean, clutter-free kitchen can make a strong positive impression on potential buyers. Clear the countertops, leaving only a few essential items such as a coffee maker or a stylish fruit bowl. Organize cabinets and drawers and ensure the pantry and refrigerator are tidy. A clean, organized kitchen not only looks more spacious but also suggests to buyers that the home has been well-maintained.

5. STREAMLINE THE CLOSETS

Crowded closets can give the impression of limited storage space. In bedroom closets, keep only the clothes that you frequently wear and enjoy. Store or donate the rest. Linen closets should have no more than two sets of fresh sheets and pillowcases per bed, and only the best towels and washcloths should remain. Ensure everything fits comfortably in the allotted space. Hall closets should not appear to be bursting at the seams, and there should be enough room to accommodate guests' outerwear.