

Home Staging: Should You Hire a Professional?

Home staging is a marketing strategy that encourages you to make your home as presentable as it can be to buyers by dressing the interior and exterior of your house so that it looks more like a model home.

Clean Is Key

The most important tip to remember when preparing your home for resale is to make it clean, clean, clean. The last thing a potential buyer will want to see is a sink full of dishes or a grimy tub.

Clear The Clutter

Another important tip when staging your home is to lose the clutter. Keeping rooms simple, modern, and tasteful is key. This is also a good time to depersonalize your home. Remove family photos, personal collections, and anything else that may not appeal to potential buyers or that may detract from the features of your home.

Curb Appeal

When staging your home, don't forget to consider the appeal of the property itself. Be sure your front lawn is mowed and free of weeds, you have a tidy and presentable yard, and that the features of both the front and back yards are highlighted.

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Five top tips for first-time homebuyers

Genworth Canada



First-Time Homebuyers' Tip #1: Prioritize your house (or condo) hunt

If you're looking to buy this spring, now's the time to take a few personal leave days to house hunt. Sit down with your partner to hammer out priorities so you're on the same page when it comes to your house hunt. Then, once you see a strong candidate, be ready to act fast.

First-Time Homebuyers' Tip #2: Get pre-approved

It's important to launch your house hunt having already obtained pre-approval for a mortgage. This marks you as a serious buyer, and lets you jump on a property you are interested in without losing time applying after the fact. Mortgage pre-approval also helps narrow your search as you have your price range established.

First-Time Homebuyers' Tip #3: Search the hot new neighbourhoods

Millennials are more committed to car-free lifestyles than the average Canadian. Accordingly, many condo developers have planned communities geared at diehard urbanites, with proximity to public transit, supermarkets, well-lit bike and running paths, dog-friendly green spaces and amenities such as bike lockers. Be sure to check out high-density condo communities to see what they have to offer for you.

First-Time Homebuyers' Tip #4: Consider moving out of town

Many first-time homebuyers are trading big metropolises for smaller cities that are in the early waves of urban renewal. These emerging markets offer great deals, particularly on detached houses. For born-and-raised urbanites, these emerging cities can mean less culture shock versus heading to the 'burbs. Often these locations offer extensive public transit, a thriving cultural and retail scene, and easy access to the larger urban hub (which can be handy if you still work there).

First-Time Homebuyers' Tip #5: Use social media to help find a home

Finally, don't limit your house hunt to the MLS or real estate agent websites. The real estate market is a fascinating subject – as any HGTV junkie will attest! – and a number of bloggers are probably busy covering the very neighbourhoods in which you are house hunting. Googling "real estate blog" and your city, or specifically your dream neighbourhood, will yield a variety of options. They're a great way to get sneak peek of exclusive listings and private sales, and to survey comparables and get a feel for your desired community.

Fun Father's Day Surprises for Dad

Although it's Mother's Day that seems to get all the attention and ideas, there are a lot of fun ways to make Dad feel special on his day as well.

Take Something Off His Plate

What is his least loved chore? Consider taking care of it for him for Father's Day.

Take Him Out to The Ball Game

Father's Day falls right in baseball season, and if Dad is a lover of the game there's nothing better than tickets and a bag of peanuts. It doesn't have to be major league; take dad to see a local team-tickets will be much more affordable, and a smaller field means seeing the game up close.

Make Breakfast His Way

Mom may want pancakes covered in strawberries and whipped cream, but Dad might be more interested in a breakfast that's a bit meatier. Consider surprisingly delicious bacon and cheddar waffles, which are wonderful with maple syrup.

The best surprise for your Dad depends on what he really loves. Consider his interests and then choose something accordingly. Whatever your Dad loves best, you can find the perfect way to surprise him this Father's Day.

How to be a great neighbour



During the warmer months, it's common to see our neighbours out and about enjoying the weather and working in the yard. You can help make the season pleasant for everyone with a little effort towards being a great neighbour. Here are some tips to become the neighbour everyone loves:

- 1. Keep your yard tidy and well-maintained.** The key to a beautiful yard is keeping grass and bushes healthy. Mowing and trimming are simple ways to boost curb appeal, and your community will appreciate your contribution to keeping the block looking great.
- 2. Be conscious of the time of day.** An easy way to annoy those around you is to make noise early in the morning or late at night. Resist the urge and wait until a polite time of day to mow, pressure wash or leaf blow. Or opt for equipment that keeps things quieter, like a Yardworks lawn mower with Briggs & Stratton's Quiet Power Technology, which is up to 60 per cent quieter than a traditional gas-powered machine.
- 3. Keep it tidy.** Bring trash and recycling cans in from the curb in a timely manner and keep your lawn free of tools and toys. After a storm, pick up debris and rake or mulch foliage so it doesn't blow into another yard.
- 4. Lend a hand.** If you're already working outside, offer to help a neighbour with some maintenance. It can be more efficient and rewarding to work with a friend.

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