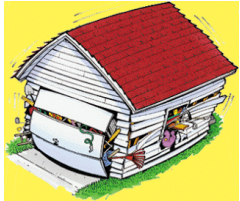


# Secrets of Home Staging

Highlight your home's strengths, downplay its weaknesses and appeal to the greatest possible pool of prospective tenants with these home-staging tips.



## Bye, Bye Clutter

The most important thing you can do to prepare your home for rent is to get rid of clutter. One of the major contributors to a cluttered look is having too much furniture. When professional stagers descend on a home being prepped for market, they often whisk away as much as half the owner's furnishings, and the house looks much bigger for it. You don't have to whittle that drastically, but take a hard look at what you have and ask yourself what you can live without.

**The Kitchen:** Many potential tenants express that the kitchen is one of the first rooms they want to see. Make sure it's spotless and bright. It could be worth it to invest in some newer appliances. The most appealing property gets rented first.

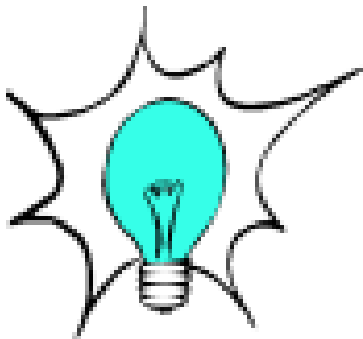
**The Bathroom:** The bathroom is one spot that should be absolutely sparkling. Don't skimp on bathroom repairs and replacements just because it's a small room. Take care of any water or mold damage, replace toilet seats, and purchase matching towel and shower sets.



Real estate agents say they often catch house hunters opening bathroom cabinets. So, disband the clutter and clean out your cabinets. You want to show tenants storage, not a lack of storage.

**The Closets:** Closets may not have equal importance to all, but they can make or break the decision of a potential tenant. Clear them out if they are overstuffed. You can still keep some clothes or items in the closet if you neatly display them.

## Home Lighting



One of the things that make staged homes look so warm and welcoming is great lighting. As it turns out, many of our homes are improperly lighted. To remedy the problem, increase the wattage in your lamps and fixtures. Aim for a total of 100 watts for each 50 square feet. Don't depend on just one or two fixtures per room, either. Make sure you have three types of lighting: ambient (general or overhead), task (pendant, under-cabinet or reading) and accent (table and wall).

## Make It Bigger

To make a room appear to be bigger than it is, paint it the same color as the adjacent room. If you have a small kitchen and dining room, a seamless look will make both rooms feel like one big space. And make a sunporch look bigger and more inviting by painting it green to reflect the color of nature. Another design trick: If you want to create the illusion of more space, paint the walls the same color as your drapery. It will give you a seamless and sophisticated look.

## Neutral and Appealing

Painting a living room a fresh neutral color helps tone down any dated finishes in the space. Take a chance and test a quart of paint in a warm, neutral hue. These days, the definition of neutral extends way beyond beige, from warm tans and honeys to soft blue-greens. As for bold wall colors, they have a way of reducing offers, so go with neutrals in large spaces.



## First Impressions

Unfinished projects can scare off potential tenants, so finish them. Missing floorboards and large cracks in the sidewalk on the way to your door tend to be a red flag, for example, and they cost you less to fix than having your property sit for another rent cycle.



**The Yard:** The neighbor's yard might look great, but what about yours? Make sure that the outside of your home is tidy. Do some basic landscaping so the yard doesn't look wild and unkempt. Even small tasks like updating the mailbox and installing exterior light fixtures can help your property stand out.

**The Entrance:** As soon as a potential renter opens the door, they'll make quick conclusions. Create a welcoming and open entrance, meaning eliminate any possible clutter and display some fresh flowers from the garden.

Our Rental Expert can meet with you in your home to discover any opportunities you may have to increase the interest your home has online, resulting in more showings.