



Spend a Little Get a Lot

- A new door mat will spruce up a clean entryway.
- Use mirrors to make small areas of the house appear larger.
- Replace old discolored or moldy shower curtains with an inexpensive new one in a neutral or coordinating color.
- When your house is on the market, turn on exterior lights and interior lights that can be seen from the street. Keep one light on in each room that faces the street from sunset to bedtime to make the house look inviting to buyers drive past at night.
- Like rooms, closets will look larger if they are uncluttered and organized.
- Spruce up a drab kitchen with bright but inexpensive curtains or window toppers.
- Stained grout will stand out in an otherwise sparkling bathroom - use a bleach pen to clean it or re-grout between tiles.



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The Mike Van Straaten Home Seller Newsletter

Getting The Best Bang For Your Buck - Top 5 Fix Ups For Your Money



It is easy to get overwhelmed when our getting ready to put your home on the real estate market, after all, a plethora of books have been devoted to the subject and each one has a to-do list that could intimidate even the most organized of sellers. Take heart, though, because many experts agree on five relatively inexpensive repairs or renovations that won't blow your budget to bits or cause your stress level to skyrocket. They will, however, enable you to sell your home more quickly and get top dollar for it. Take a deep breath, relax and know that these suggestions will make your experience a bit easier.

Before you pick up the first paint brush, carpet swatch, or bag of mulch, reach for the scrub brush and cleaning solution - or hire a cleaning service. The first order of business is to give your house an in-depth cleaning. This means scrubbing ceilings, floors and everything in-between them - inside and out. A trip to your local discount store can yield adequate cleaning solutions, scrub brushes, sponges, mops and anything else you need to make your home sparkle. And once it is sparkling, you are all set to work your way down this list!

1. Painting

Many experts rate painting the house inside and out right up there with cleaning on the importance scale. Usually the cost of the paint is lower than the value a paint job adds to the house.

This even holds true if you opt to hire a professional to do it, which may be a good idea since it would get done more quickly and with less mess. Either way, opt for light, neutral colors such as white or beige and paint every room the same color.

These colors appeal to more people, enhance the light in the rooms, make space seem larger and give continuity to the house. Use a flat finish on walls and a washable high gloss finish in a complimentary color for the doors and woodwork. Don't forget to paint the ceilings, which get dirty and appear darker over time. A painted room will still look dreary if the ceiling is neglected. After deep cleaning your house, painting is the next step in preparing your home for the scrutiny of potential buyers.

2. Replacing Carpet

Think your carpet looks okay and needn't be replaced? Think, again. Most experts agree that carpet should be replaced if it is over a year old. Take out worn, dated or outlandish colored carpet and replace it with a tight weave in a neutral color like white or beige. Lighter colors will make the room appear larger. Carpet needn't be expensive to improve the look of the house, be attractive to a buyer and pay for itself with a higher selling price.

(Continued on reverse)

...Top 5 Fix Ups For Your Money (Cont.)

3. Landscaping

Putting some time and effort into landscaping your property goes a long way towards improving the home's curb appeal, or the first impression a prospective buyer has when he pulls up to the house. With landscaping there is a direct trade off between time and money. You get more for your money when you have the time to plant grass seed instead of sod or purchase smaller plants and let them grow into maturity. Sod costs more but is instantly green. Seeds cost less but take more time. An inexpensive way to add color to the yard is to clear out dead foliage or grass and replace it with flowering plants. Make sure you add some fresh topsoil and mulch around the flower beds. Don't forget to prune shrubs so they stay healthy and mulch around them to stave off weeds. After putting effort into improving the landscaping, remember to maintain it with regular watering, fertilizer and edging.

4. Driveway Repair

While we are talking about curb appeal, it is time to mention the importance of your driveway. It is, after all, what they buyers will see when they first arrive! While a good driveway isn't likely to evoke exclamations of joy, a bad driveway creates an initial bad impression that will have to be reversed. It is better to repair the driveway. Buyers will see oil and rust stains, broken pieces and cracks, so it is best to clean and repair as much as possible.

Commercial cleaners and bleach work well on cement driveways and are readily available at discount or home improvement stores. Areas that are cracked can be cut away and re-poured without replacing the entire driveway. If your driveway is asphalt, putting down a new coat of tar or resealing the black top gives it a clean look. Brick driveways should be carefully examined for loose and broken bricks, replace any that are broken, make sure all the bricks are in alignment and spray weed killer between them.

5. Enhancing the Front Door Area

The front door is the entrance into what could be the prospective buyers new home so it needs to be clean, in

good repair and inviting in appearance. Often, a new hardwood door - which can run between \$1,000 and to over \$2,000 - can upgrade the entire appearance of the entry way, giving it a stately look. However, if nothing else, give the door a good scrubbing and a couple coats of paint.

Fix squeaky or sticky hinges, make sure door knobs work well, double check the doorbell and replace light bulbs. It doesn't hurt to put out a new welcome mat and add a potted plant for color - you want to beckon visitors to come inside your sparkling clean home!



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