

YOUR HOME

AUGUST
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TIPS AND TRENDS TO HELP MAXIMIZE HOME BUYING AND SELLING

Set the Stage

If you're planning to sell your home, you may hear your REALTOR® suggest staging, which helps to set the scene in your home, making it more appealing to buyers through renovation or redecoration. It can help make your abode more appealing by allowing prospective buyers to envision themselves living there.



With proper staging, something as simple as painting your walls can go a long way towards selling your home faster and for the best possible price. According to a 2006 study by Accredited Staging Professionals, homes listed for sale without being staged lasted, on average, 163 days on the market. Staged homes averaged only 8 to 13 days on the market.

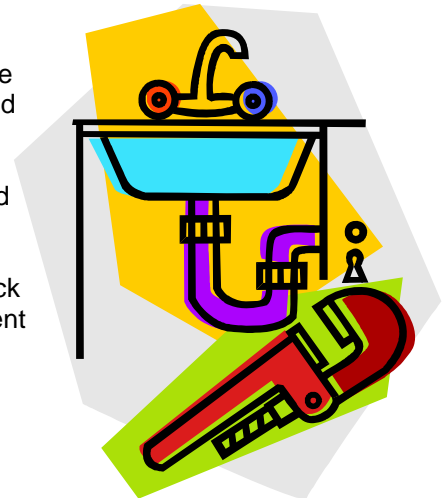
Staging costs vary depending the scope of the project. Some staging techniques, like rearranging furniture or simplifying the décor, are free. Other projects, such as installing granite countertops or new kitchen appliances, can be costly but might help boost your home's appeal. Costs also differ depending on where you live. According to Barb Schwartz, author of "Home Staging: The Winning Way to Sell Your House For More Money," the cost of staging a home on the West coast averages \$2,800, compared to \$1,800 in the Midwest and approximately \$3,800 on the East coast.

Save Some H2O

The average American uses between 80 and 100 gallons of water per day. Not surprisingly, cutting back on your water consumption can save you money and help the environment. The experts at www.earth911.org, an environmental resource network, have some tips to decrease your water usage so you don't get soaked by your water and energy bills.

Indoors

The bathroom consumes the most water in the house, and a leaky toilet is often the culprit. To determine if you have a leak, drop some food coloring into the toilet tank. If that color appears in the bowl, you have a leak. Check for worn-out, corroded or bent parts. If your toilet handle frequently sticks in the flush position and the water is constantly running, replace or adjust the handle. And if your toilet is already in good working order, you can still conserve water by avoiding unnecessary flushing. Dispose of tissues and similar waste in the wastebasket instead.



To reduce water consumption even more, consider purchasing some of the low-flow products and attachments at your local hardware store. A low-flow model toilet can reduce your indoor water usage up to 20 percent, while an ultra low-flow showerhead can save up to 2.5 gallons of water per minute.

Outdoors

Be careful not to over-water your lawn. Generally, lawns only need watering every five to seven days, and a heavy rainstorm might mean that you don't need to water for a couple of weeks. Try to water during the early morning hours, which reduces evaporation. Micro or drip sprinklers and soaker hoses are the most water-efficient systems to use.



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Beautify Your Bathroom



Your bathroom may be the smallest room in your home, but remodeling it can feel like a huge project. Here are some tips from Home and Garden Television to help you get it done:

1. Function First. Like the kitchen, the bathroom is one of the hardest-working rooms in the house. Keep function in mind when planning any remodeling or decorating. Consider adding touches that make the room more user-friendly, such as a seat in

the shower or additional lighting.

2. Determine layout. Consult the plumbing layout when you are planning to move bathroom fixtures. Think about your daily routine and plan accordingly, keeping fixtures within logical reach of each other (for example, keep the towel rack near the shower).

3. Choose color and style. Think about what you want from the room. Should it be calming? Elegant? Fun?

Choose colors that fit your vision. Have fun with your theme or motif, but always keep in mind the size of the room. Too much will appear cluttered.

4. Accent with fixtures. Your faucet and other plumbing fixtures can add drama and appeal to your bathroom. Today's products offer a plethora of styles and finishes, such as brushed metal, brass and stainless steel.

5. Lighten up. Bathroom lighting is important. Use task lighting for the sink and mirror so you can see clearly. The entire bathroom, however, doesn't need to be drenched in glaring light. Use softer lighting elsewhere to enhance the mood.

6. Mix materials. Use fabrics and other soft objects to reduce the harshness of tiles and other hard surfaces. Choose soft and luxurious towels, mats and window treatments.

Say Yes to



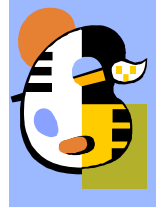
Buying or selling a home can seem like an overwhelming task. But the right REALTOR® can make the process easier - and more profitable. A Certified Residential Specialist (CRS), with years of experience and success, will help you make smart decisions in a fast-paced, complex and competitive market.

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Color Combinations 101

When using multiple colors in one room, follow the 60-30-10 rule: 60 percent dominant color, 30 percent secondary color and 10 percent accent color.



* DID YOU KNOW

In 2006, 85 percent of home buyers used a REALTOR® when purchasing their home.



Do you know someone who is thinking about buying or selling a home? Please mention my name.

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