

1. What is Home Staging

Home staging has been around for over 20 years, but it is quickly becoming a standard in the real estate industry as the first critical step in marketing your home. It is simply utilizing a series of proven techniques to highlight the home's strengths and down play its weaknesses in order to appeal to the largest possible pool of buyers. When a home appeals to more people, this translates into more interest and therefore, more offers – possibly even competitive offers! By following the simple guidelines described in this book, your home could possibly spend 50% less time on the market and sell for an average of 6.9% more than its non-staged counterparts.*

In order to get your home ready for the market, you first have to take a step back and see it with “Buyer’s Eyes.” If you cannot see it objectively, you will not be able to package it effectively. For some, this seems impossible. This is your home, the place where many memories have been created. How can you now view it as just a product? Your ERA® sales associate will be there to guide you through this entire process and help you easily transition to the next milestone of your life. The good news is, preparing your home for sale doesn’t have to break the bank! Home staging is about creativity, not cash. Your staging budget will vary on your home’s individual needs. It can cost as little or as much as you want.

*Based on a 2004-2006 StagedHomes.com survey of 300 houses staged by ASP™ stagers.

The following chart shows the approximate return on investment of your staging dollars.

	Typical Cost	Increase in Sales Price	Average Return on Investment	Agents who Recommend
Lighten/Brighten	\$86-\$110	\$768-\$935	769%	84%
Clean/De-clutter	\$305-\$339	\$2,093-\$2,378	594%	91%
Fix Plumbing/Electrical	\$338-\$381	\$922-\$1,208	196%	63%
Landscape/Trim	\$432-\$506	\$1,594-\$1,839	266%	72%
Staging	\$212-\$1,089	\$2,275-\$2,841	169%	76%
Kitchen/Bath Upgrades	\$1,546-\$2,120	\$3,823-\$4,885	138%	83%
Repair Flooring	\$1,531-\$1,714	\$2,267-\$2,589	50%	62%
Paint Exterior	\$2,188-\$2,381	\$2,907-\$3,233	34%	57%
Replace Carpeting	\$2,602-\$2,765	\$3,585-\$3,900	39%	65%

A 2003 HomeGain survey of 2,000 real estate agents nationwide found that moderately-priced home improvements, ranging from \$80-\$2,800, made in preparation for sale, actually yielded the highest returns when a house is sold.

2. Before You Get Started

The following are a few things to keep in mind when beginning to prepare your home for sale.

- ★ Walk through your home looking at it objectively with the potential buyer in mind. View your home as a buyer would and completely remove yourself from your emotional attachment. Include a neighbor or a friend to help you be objective.
- ★ Each room has a positive feature that a buyer will notice. Begin to plan how you will accentuate that special feature.
- ★ When removing your personal items, do not think that your taste is in question. Just think of it as packing some things early and alleviating some stress come moving time.
- ★ Staging is not about money. It is a beneficial marketing investment.
- ★ Always seek to elicit a positive emotional response from the buyer in every area you stage. The idea is for the buyers to be able to “mentally move in.” Have them say “I can see myself here for a long time...” not “I hate the colors of these walls and they will be a hassle to re-paint.”



3. 12 Steps to Set the Stage

Staging your home can seem overwhelming. With the end-result in mind, stage room by room instead of trying to stage the entire house at once. Focusing on one room at a time creates a fun project the entire family can enjoy!

There is a process to staging that should be incorporated in each and every room. Follow these 12 steps every time, and you'll be done before you know it!

1. **Assess the room.** Use your "Buyer's Eyes" to imagine that you are looking for your next home. What would you notice? Be tough on yourself.
2. **Pick a focal point.** Everything will revolve around showcasing this highlight. Is there a beautiful view? Fireplace? Beamed ceiling?
3. **Remove clutter.** Box up all non-essentials including your closet clutter. Again, think of it as packing up a little early. What can you live without while your home is on the market?
4. **"De-personalize."** Remove personal collections and pictures. You want your home to appeal to the largest pool of potential buyers. You don't want them to feel as though they are intruding on your personal space.
5. **Renew, repair or replace** anything that needs to be.
6. **Rearrange furniture** to showcase spaciousness.
7. **"Re-accessorize."** Go back to the storage pile. Is there anything that you can use that will coordinate well with your plan for this room? Please refer to "Low Cost, No Cost Ideas" on page 8.
8. **Fine-tune your work.** Make sure all details are exactly as you want them.
9. **Clean! Clean! Clean!** This cannot be stressed enough. You'd be surprised at what a buyer will look at. Everything needs to sparkle.
10. **Add life!** Bringing any form of nature into a room adds a feeling of "home." Use flowers, greenery, natural lighting, or anything else you can think of.
11. **Prepare to show.** An "It's Showtime" card has been provided on page 13. Listed are things that need to be taken care of each and every time potential buyers visit – from open houses to private showings.
12. **Ask for help if you need it.** Remember your ERA® sales associate is your partner.