

The Ultimate Guide to Taking Excellent Listing Photos



from the real estate experts at



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Photography Success Tips

- **Prepare Your Home:**

Clean everything really well. Wash windows, scrub grout, remove scuffs from walls and consider painting if your room is looking dull.

- **De-Personalize Your Space:**

Take down family photos and personal artifacts to transform your home into a neutral space that buyers can visualize themselves living in.

- **Give each room an obvious purpose:**

If you have a guest room that doubles as an office, pick one and unify your space. You want to make it easy for potential buyers to identify the purpose of each room in your home.

- **Reduce clutter:**

Store or hide anything that isn't visually attractive or serving a purpose. This includes things like toothbrushes, mail, kitchen gadgets and paper towel rolls. Ideally, you just want tasteful decor and furniture, no "stuff".



Photography Success Tips

- **Don't use effects; do use a tripod:**

You want buyers to be able to see what your space actually looks like, so avoid fish eye lenses and dramatic photo filters. Also, make sure you have a tripod handy to help stabilize your camera and avoid blurring on longer exposure shots.

- **Clean your camera lens before you start:**

Sometimes, a small piece of dust or finger smudge can hide on your lens without you knowing. Make sure you don't discover an issue when you import all the photos onto your computer. Instead, clean your lens really well before you get started.

- **Look at existing listings for inspiration:**

Take a look at homes for sale and make note of what makes good photos pop. Then incorporate those things (great lighting, minimal clutter, good composition, etc.) into your photography session.

- **Take lots and lots of photos:**

This one is simple – the more photos you take, the more you'll have to choose from!



Photography Success Tips

- **Use natural lighting whenever possible:**
Open the blinds! Shoot your east-facing rooms in the morning and west-facing rooms in the afternoon to capture the best light of the day. If you need to take photos when you don't have good natural light, use lamps and accent lights to make the room look cozy and warm.
- **Choose plain colors over busy patterns:**
Ornamental decor can be beautiful, but it doesn't always translate well in photos. The cleaner and simpler, your decor, the larger and more organized your space will look.
- **Compose your shots carefully:**
Try to get a straight shot (don't tilt the camera up or down) and get as much of the room in the frame as you possibly can.

Also focus on making your shots as symmetrical by making sure the space is balanced (meaning there aren't too many objects on one side of the room or the other).



Step 1: Start Outside

Shoot to Impress

Your first couple listing photos should be excellent exterior shots that show off your property. Be sure to capture your entry way, your front yard and any backyard or patio space you have. If you have any nice landscaping, be sure to frame your photo so you can capture those details as well.

Try to avoid photographing things like phone lines, wires or dumpsters if at all possible. Also, consider that exterior photos usually look better if they're shot at an angle rather than straight on because it gives the image more depth.



Outdoor Tips

- **Evaluate your curb appeal:**

Buyers will form their first impression of your home based on its curb appeal, so make sure it's a good one. Before you take photos, put a coat of paint on the front door, make sure your mailbox is in good shape and spend some time on your landscaping.

- **Use the sunlight as a guide:**

Always try to keep the sun behind you when you're taking photos outdoors. If it's a sunny day, wait until the sun is shining directly onto the front of the house to get the best shot. If the sun dips behind the house, it can be very difficult to capture an image that isn't underexposed and dull. Clouds can be beneficial because they diffuse the sun's beams, giving you more even lighting.

- **Give yourself some space:**

If you have a large property, consider crossing the street or stepping into the neighbors yard to get the best angle.

- **Highlight any unique features:**

If you have a small pond, great patio, awesome garden or amazing play area for kids, be sure to highlight it in your outdoor photos.



Step 2: Capture Your Interior Space

Time to Tackle the Inside

This section of the book breaks down how to effectively compose powerful shots in each room of your house. We'll provide advice on how to stage as well as information on how to use lighting and angles to make your room look spacious and inviting.

As you set up each room, carefully consider your furniture placement. The reading chair you have in your living room right now might be the perfect item to use to create a reading nook in the master.

Now let's get in to the details!



Living Room Tips

- **Set up a cozy seating area:**

Make sure you have at least one photo that features a comfortable hangout space with a couch or chairs. Your goal here is to set a scene that will make people want to come look at (and relax in) your space.

- **Clean carpets and polish hardwood floors:**

Your floor takes up a lot of visual space in your living room – so make sure it's in tip top shape. If you have hardwoods or laminate flooring, use a cleaner that offers a little shine. If you've got carpets, rent a rug doctor to brighten up any dingy spots.

- **Add decor to any built ins and mantles:**

An empty shelf is boring to look at. Add some color or visual interest to built-ins and mantles. You can feature a nice painting, pretty vase, candles or a stack of books. As a bonus, your space will be more intriguing to potential buyers!



Kitchen Tips

- **Remove countertop clutter.**

The kitchen is almost always one of the most cluttered rooms in the house. Before you photograph it, put away the Keurig, toaster oven and blender to make your countertops look more open and spacious.

- **Thoughtfully place accent decor.**

Just because you're dealing with the kitchen doesn't mean you can't dress it up a bit. A bowl of fruit or vase of fresh flowers will give your space a pop of color that will be eye catching in photos.

- **Replace outdated hardware fixtures:**

If you have outdated cupboards, don't worry about replacing the whole thing. Instead, replace old handles and knobs with new, modern hardware to transform your space without spending a fortune. If you're feeling ambitious, stain or paint them for a more dramatic makeover.



Dining Room Tips

- **Make sure your table isn't too big for the space:**

If your dining room table looks monstrous and makes the room feel crowded, consider borrowing a smaller one from a friend or family member. If your table is adjustable, you can just take out a leaf or two to open up the space.

- **Make it look inviting:**

You don't necessarily have to set the table, but you should incorporate minimal decor to set the stage for an inviting area to have guests. Set out a wine decanter and a couple glasses with a vase of flowers or set up a serving tray with a pretty ice bucket and a couple glasses.

- **Let there be light:**

In addition to letting in as much outside light as possible, make sure all the light bulbs in your dining room light fixtures are working. If any bulbs are burnt out, replace them before you take your photos. A dark bulb will stand out like a sore thumb in a well composed photo.



Bathroom Tips

- **Hang nice hand towels:**

Bathroom towels are cheap. Spring for a couple nice ones that you can feature in your photos to give your bathroom a sense of opulence.

- **Pay attention to details:**

Make sure your showers and walls are mold and mildew free, your shower door is sparkling clean, your mirrors are free of water spots and your toilet seat is down.

- **Watch out for mirrors:**

We've all seen the listing photo where the agent or owner catches themselves in the bathroom mirror. Be aware of where your mirrors are and stand in a spot where it won't catch your reflection to avoid this common mistake.

- **Shoot low and straight on:**

The bathroom is a good room to shoot from a lower angle (about 40 inches off the floor). Doing so will allow you to capture all the fixture details and will provide a better feel for scale.



Master Bedroom Tips

- **Keep decor simple:**

Don't go overboard with decorations in your master (or other bedrooms). Make the bed your focal point, use a plain colored comforter, stick with a minimal color scheme and don't go crazy with decor. Try to create a clean space that looks like it would be perfect to relax in.

- **Take trinkets off dressers and nightstands:**

People want to see your space, not your stuff. Make sure your remotes, jewelry, digital alarm clock and cup of water are hidden from view.

- **Clean and photograph your closet:**

If you have a large closet, clear it out and photograph it to appeal to buyers looking for lots of storage.

- **Highlight any unique features:**

If you have a reading nook, vaulted ceilings, his-and-hers closets or any other unique features in your master, make sure you feature them in your photos.



Kid's Bedroom Tips

- **Remove character-specific themes:**
If your kiddos room is decked out in Disney princesses or football players, it's best to change it up. You want the room to look as versatile as it possibly can to appeal to the broadest audience.
- **Use creative storage:**
There are so many great ways to provide your little ones with storage that will help you keep the room clean through out the selling process. If your kid has too much stuff (...don't they all?) invest in some storage cubes or shelves that'll make it easy to prep for photos and for showings.
- **Remove any names from the space:**
Doing so is a good safety precaution (remember - these images will be online). This step will also help potential buyers be able to easily visualize themselves or their children in the space.



Step 3: Build Your Listing

- **Select an intriguing main listing photo:**

Your goal with your main listing photo is to get buyers to click on your home to learn more about it. Use our outdoor tips at the beginning of this guide to make sure you get a great shot of your property.

- **Focus on buyer favorites:**

What do buyers care most about when it comes to listing photos? Research says outdoor space, the master bedroom, closets, bathrooms and the kitchen top the list. Make sure you capture these areas and include them in your property listing.

- **Post at least 5 but no more than 10 photos:**

You want to get potential buyers interested in your home by showing off key features, but you don't want them to feel like they know everything about the property. We recommend you include 5 to 10 great photos on your listing to encourage intrigued buyers to come see it in person.



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