

How to prepare your home for its Professional Photography Session.



The logo for Roanoke Real Estate Photos features a stylized house icon in shades of blue and purple above the text "Roanoke Real Estate Photos" in a bold, sans-serif font. A small fish-like symbol is positioned to the right of the text.

With most buyer's current health concerns and shopping for homes online, high-resolution slideshows and video tours are a must. Here is how to make your home shine on camera:

* Understand the camera's perspective.
The camera's eye is different from the human eye. It magnifies clutter and poor furniture arrangement so that even a home that feels comfortable in person can look jumbled online.

*Make it spotless.
Cameras also tend to magnify grime. Don't forget floor coverings and walls; a spot on a rug might be overlooked during a regular home showing, but it could become a focal point online.

*Know what to leave.
You want to avoid clutter, but try to have three items of varying heights on each surface. On an end table, you can place a tall lamp (high), a small plant (medium), and a book (low).

*Take practice pictures with your own camera/phone.
This will give you an idea of what the home will look like on camera before the photographer shows up. Examine the photos and make changes to improve each room's appearance, such as opening blinds to let in natural light, removing magnets from the refrigerator, or taking down distracting art.

*Pare down.
Removing one or two pieces of furniture from each room, even if just for the shoot, can make your space appear larger on screen.

*Rearrange.
Spotlight the flow of your space by creating a focal point on the furthest wall from the doorway and arranging the other pieces of furniture to make a triangle shape. The focal

point may be a bed in a bedroom or a china cabinet in a dining room.

*Accessorize.
Include a healthy plant in every room; the camera loves greenery. Energize bland decor by placing a bright vase on a mantle or draping an afghan over a couch.

*Keep the home in shape.
Buyers who liked what they saw online expect to encounter the same home in person.

**Room Specific Guidelines

*Kitchen
Clear as much as possible off counters including food, dish racks, cutting boards, and small appliances
Put away any dishes in the sink
Remove fridge magnets and other items from the fridge
Remove dish liquids, dish towels, and cleaning products as well as garbage bins, brooms, and mops
If possible, put out a bowl of fresh fruit or a vase of fresh flowers on the kitchen table or countertop
Remove pet bowls, beds, and toys

*Bathrooms
Clear off the countertops including toothbrushes, soaps, razors, lotions, and beauty products
Remove garbage cans, bath mats, scales, spare toilet rolls, and toilet brushes
Remove shampoo and other products from the shower/tub area
Clean tub area and leave the shower curtain open
Close toilet lid
Remove pet bowls, pet beds, and toys

Put out fresh towels neatly folded on towel bars

***Bedrooms**

Clear away clothes, shoes, laundry baskets, and make sure that nothing shows under the bed

Remove items from bedside tables, including books, magazines, and jewelry
Put away stuffed animals and excess toys

Remove pet bowls, beds, and toys
Remove portable fans, heaters, and wastebaskets

Make the bed with a nice bedspread and fluffy pillows at the head of the bed

***Dining Room**

Arrange chairs neatly around the table
Add a nice centerpiece such as a bowl of fresh fruit or a floral arrangement

***Living/Family Rooms**

Remove piles of newspapers and magazines

Put away all TV/stereo remotes
Remove excess knick-knacks and clutter
Conceal all electric cords as best you can
Remove pet bowls, beds, and toys

***Exterior**

Keep the lawn mowed, and trim trees/overgrown shrubs
Rake up any leaves
Sweep porch and sidewalks
Remove all garden tools including hoses and sprinklers and store them neatly in garage or storage area
Put away pet bowls, beds, and toys
Put away children's bikes and toys
Move garbage and recycling bins out of sight
If you have outdoor furniture, wipe it down and make sure that cushions look clean and nice

****Final Touches**

Now that you've cleaned, de-cluttered, and tidied up, there are just a couple last to-dos. On the day of the photo session, turn off any ceiling fans and televisions. If you have a pet, it is important to have them out of the way when the photos are taken. Last, move any cars out of the driveway and do not park them in front of the home.

Exterior shots are especially important and will make an initial impression on potential buyers.