

Selling for More

28 Day Blitz



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SELLING YOUR HOME FOR MORE

When getting your home ready for sale, think of it in terms of finding a potential suitor.

You see, for house hunters it's a bit like speed dating. You've probably heard of this dating craze, whereby singles meet 20 or more potential mates in one evening by having five-minute dates with each of them. The idea behind the phenomenon is that two people either have chemistry or they don't.

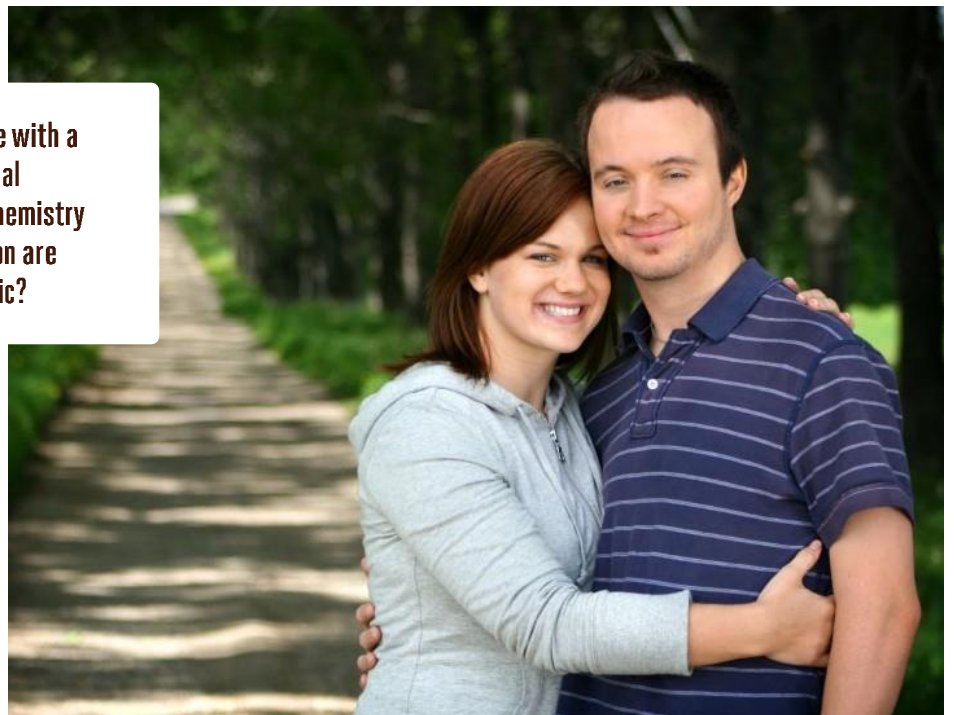
Bear with me . . .

Many of us look for a mate with a logical list of our personal criteria. But when the chemistry and emotional connection are right, who remembers logic? We follow our hearts. If you've ever been house hunting, you can see the similarities. Your agent will take you to six or more houses in a single afternoon. Within minutes, you'll reject most of them, choosing possibly one or two properties to return to for a second look.

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According to property styling experts, real estate staging is all about creating the best first impression, thus paving the way for potential buyers to fall in love. “Creating just the right atmosphere is accomplished in the overall look of your home, but it's also very much in the details. Potential buyers start to form an opinion of your house before they even walk in your front door.”

“It's important to maximise street appeal, but then you must also carry that same attention to detail right through the rest of the house. Your goal is to romance potential buyers. You want them to lose their hearts and say,

‘This is home. We have to have this house!’

Take a moment to check out the table below and which home improvements added the most value to seller’s homes:

Home Improvement Project	Average Cost \$	Home Price Increase \$	Return on Investment	% of Agents Recommend
Clean and De-clutter	100-200	1500-2000	872%	98%
Home Staging	300-400	1500-2000	586%	82%
Lighten and Brighten	200-300	1000-1500	572%	95%
Landscape Front/Back	300-400	1000-2000	473%	94%
Repair Plumbing	300-400	1000-15000	327%	88%
Update Electrical	300-400	1000-15000	309%	89%
Replace or Shampoo Carpets	400-500	1000-15000	295%	97%
Paint Interior Walls	500-750	1500-2000	250%	94%
Repair Damaged Floors	500-750	1500-2000	250%	91%
Update Kitchen	1000-1500	2000-3000	237%	69%
Paint Outside of Home	750-1000	1500-2000	201%	81%
Update Bathroom	750-1000	1000-15000	172%	70%



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Disclaimer: The table above is for demonstration purposes only and property owners should make their own enquiries as to costs for any proposed work on their property



Week 1:

DECLUTTERING AND BATHROOMS

As you can see from the table (page 2), decluttering is key in this entire process.

As with anything, getting rid of clutter can be made incredibly simple: just go through your stuff, one section, closet, drawer, or shelf at a time, and get rid of everything that isn't absolutely essential, that you don't love and use often.

Of course, simplifying a process like that isn't terribly useful to many people who struggle with clutter. So, with that in mind, I present to you 15 fabulous tips for decluttering.

Here are 12 great tips by the readers of Zen Habits:

1. Declutter for 15 minutes every day. It's amazing how much you can get through if you just do it in small increments like this.
2. Don't allow things into the house in the first place. Whether you've begun decluttering the living space, or you've just completed it, stop bringing in new stuff now. Even if that's all you do and don't start decluttering immediately, if you can only establish one habit at a time, establish the no-more-stuff habit first. This way, when you do get to decluttering the existing stuff, you've already stopped making it worse. Think of bailing out a boat with a hole in it. You can bail and bail, but it won't do anything for the leak.
3. Donate stuff you're decluttering, so you don't feel bad about wasting it.
4. Create a goals chart with decluttering on it — either daily, or 3 times a week. Check off the days when you declutter, and you'll feel a great sense of accomplishment.

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Declutter for 15 minutes every day. It's amazing how much you can get through if you just do it in small increments like this.



Week 1:

DECLUTTERING AND BATHROOMS

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5. Start at the corner by the door and move your way around the room, doing the superficial stuff first – surfaces (clean out drawers, empty the bin etc. Repeat, but do more the 2nd time around – i.e. open the cupboards).
6. Whenever you're boiling the kettle for tea, tidy up the kitchen. If the kitchen is tidy, tidy up the next room – it's only 3 minutes but it keeps you on top of everything (helps if you have an Englishman's obsession with tea as well!)
7. Use the "one in, two out" rule. The rule: whenever you bring in an item, you have to throw away two other items. First you cheat, by throwing out two pieces of paper, but soon you will have to move to big stuff.
8. Clothing rule: If you haven't worn an item in 6 months, sell or donate it.
9. Declutter one room (including any closets, desks, cabinets, etc.) before starting on the next one. Spending time in that room will feel so good, and it will be so easy to keep clean, that it will motivate you to do more!
10. Internalise that your value is not in your stuff. It is just stuff. And realise that your value grows when you share your stuff. Hoarding is a selfish act.
11. Have someone else (who you trust!) help you go through things. They don't have the (sometimes irrational) emotional attachment that you might have, but can still recognise if something should be kept.
12. Gift everything or have a garage sale with anything that's at all saleable.

Make sure storage areas are neatly packed. Those clear boxes you can buy from reject shops are excellent for this purpose.



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Week 1:

DECLUTTERING AND BATHROOMS

Use counter intelligence.

Go through the house and clear off all the horizontal surfaces like kitchen and bathroom countertops. Old magazines? Toss 'em. Knick knacks? Pack 'em. Counters need to be clear and clean.

To make it easy, focus on one room at a time. And remember that this process will actually assist you in the moving process when you've sold. It's like killing two birds with one stone.

Grimy Bathroom Walls – major red flag to buyers.

Here is an easy way to get rid of surface mould: Mix a spray bottle with one part water and one part bleach. Just spray it on the wall, and watch the mould disappear. Exit mould is a great product, and if you want a greener alternative, there are plenty of those too. Tiles can be resurfaced inexpensively, and your grimy bathroom will go from red flag to red-hot.

Regrouting is sometimes the best option (basic step by step instructions on page 7)

Shower Doors

Have a Huge Impact on a 'Clean-Feeling Bathroom'. A grimy glass shower door can really wash out your sale. Water can etch the glass and is particularly difficult to remove. One site suggested cleaning with WD 40 (maybe try a test patch first so you don't damage your glass). If all fails, maybe it's time to replace the glass. You'll be amazed at the difference it makes to your bathroom.

Pedestal Sinks are a Big Hit

They show off floor space in small bathrooms **beautifully**. **First**, your old vanity has to go. Next, just hook up your new sink and your bathroom will have dramatic appeal that brings in big bucks. Obviously this may be quite an expense, especially if floor tiles need replacing as well. As the above table suggests, cleaning and decluttering are the items that create most value in your home.

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Week 1:

DECLUTTERING AND BATHROOMS

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Regrouting Tiles

The most beautiful tiles in the world can start to look shabby when the grout gets dirty, worn or stained. This is especially true in the bathroom, which can be subject to harsh cleaners, personal grooming products and excessive moisture. It takes a little bit of effort, but regrouting your bathroom tile can help make it look new once again.

- Clean the tiles to remove dirt and soap build-up. Wash with warm soapy water or use a bathroom cleaner. Ensure that the surface is dry before proceeding.
- Remove the existing grout by using the grout saw in an up-and-down or back-and-forth sawing or scraping motion between the tiles. Repeat as necessary to ensure all grout has been removed.
- Remove grout dust thoroughly with a soft cloth or vacuum.
- Mix the grout, if using a powdered grout, by following the manufacturer's directions. Mix to the consistency of creamy peanut butter. Alternatively, use premixed grout with no preparation required.
- Lift some of the grout out of the container with a tile float or sponge. Push the grout into the gaps between the tiles, filling the joints completely.
- Remove leftover grout and haze from the surface with a damp, clean sponge, turning frequently.
- Apply a grout sealer to prevent deterioration of the grout, after 24 hours has elapsed.



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Week 2: KITCHEN AND OUTDOORS

A nice outdoor deck can be a big selling feature, but an old one is a major liability.

To give your outdoor space new life, first sand the wood. Cover it with a light-coloured stain instead of paint to give it a rustic, grainy look. Furnish it for entertaining to make your images even more eye-catching.

Adding drama to old hardwood flooring is easier than you might think.

First, isolate damaged boards, cut them out and replace them with new pieces. Rent a sander from a local hardware store, and give the floor a good sanding. The last step is to stain the boards with a rich colour, and watch your floor go from drab to dramatic in no time.

New kitchen appliances bring high returns from sellers.

Studies show that new kitchen appliances bring high returns from sellers, so get rid of old appliances that make the rest of the kitchen look dated. Once you install the new equipment, it will scream “new kitchen,” and you will see that spending a little money will make you even more.

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Improving an old indoor or outdoor hardwood floor is easier than it looks.





Week 2: KITCHEN AND OUTDOORS

Stain dated kitchen cabinets instead of replacing them.

Dated timber kitchen cabinets can be a big turnoff to potential buyers. Instead of paying big bucks to replace them, just stain them. First, apply the stain in even strokes, going with the grain of the wood. Add some stylish hardware, and your kitchen will have the up-to-date look that buyers love, for less than \$200.

Fill existing hardware holes instead of making new, unsightly ones.

Removing old kitchen hardware can leave your cabinets with stripped-out holes. Here is a trick to reusing the existing ones.

First, dip a toothpick in glue and place it in the stripped hole. Cut off the excess piece. Once the glue dries, you'll be ready to put in the hardware that buyers love.

Save money on granite bench tops.

Granite bench tops are a huge selling feature, but they can be expensive. Here are a few ways to save on this investment:

First, demolish the old ones yourself. Also, ask the granite company for remnants from previous projects. Remember, any money you spend will definitely be returned in the value these beautiful counters add to your kitchen.

The second option is to use a granite resurfer who'll be able to make your bench tops look like brand new granite, without the high expense.

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Week 3:

LIVING AREA AND FOYER

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Buyers love built-in bookshelves.

There's a fine line between filling them with clutter and staging them to sell. The trick is to arrange neutral items in clusters. Make sure that no single accessory stands out too much. That way, you'll show off your attractive built-ins, and not your personal belongings. Curb appeal is vital to attracting buyers.

Use tape outlines on the floor instead of actually moving furniture around.

Rearranging a room to stage it for your open house? Here's a tip to save time and effort. Instead of lugging the heavy furniture around the room to see what feels best, put outlines on the floor with painter's tape.

Let the sunshine in.

Buyers love light and airy living rooms, but dark and dingy isn't on their list. Open up your window shades to let some light in. Cheat some sunshine with light-coloured paint and some artificial lighting. Lamps are wonderful for dark corners. Last, arrange the space with lightly coloured furniture, and you'll have a living room that brightens your chances of a sale. (A basic off-white sofa won't cost too much to rent, and might make all the difference if your living area is dark).

Unpleasant pet odours won't win over buyers.

We all love our pets, but unpleasant pet odours can make a negative first impression. Be sure to get rid of old carpet that can trap offensive smells. Replace it with fresh new carpet in a neutral colour. Plus, if you paint the walls to match, your living room will look bigger. It'll go from designed to smell to designed to sell.

Pack up unnecessary items and furniture before you show the house.

An over-packed living room is a red flag to buyers that your home lacks storage space. Pack up unnecessary items and furniture, and move items to your garage or a nearby storage facility. Clear the way for a sale by letting buyers see your square footage, not your personal belongings.



Week 4: BEDROOMS

**Stage rooms with one purpose so buyers will know what it is.
Bedrooms add more value than an office/study.**

Potential buyers are confused by extra rooms that have a mishmash of uses. To avoid this problem, first clear away clutter and excess furniture. If you have a dedicated study that has the makings of a bedroom, you'll be adding value by taking out your office furniture and recreating the space as a bedroom for the duration of the sales campaign.

A master bedroom should appeal to both sexes.

When you are selling, your master bedroom should appeal to buyers of both sexes. Get rid of features that seem too gender-specific. Paint the walls a neutral colour, and choose bedding that matches. Then accessorise with items that complement the overall colour scheme.

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**Paint the walls a neutral colour,
and choose bedding that matches.**





Week 5:

GENERAL TIPS AND TRICKS

Storage space sells!

Potential buyers love homes that have lots of storage space. Since they will open your closets, it's a good idea to clear out unnecessary clutter, and organise your shelves to show off how much storage you really have. Plus, it gives you a chance to start packing, as you will definitely be moving once buyers see all that closet space.

Create a nice flow in your rooms.

Buyers are attracted to homes that have a good flow. You can create circulation by replacing square or rectangular dining tables with round ones.

Remember, the next buyer is as lazy as you are (no offence!!)

If the property needs work -- dated wallpaper, ratty carpet -- have it replaced now so that all buyers have to picture is moving day.

The more changes buyers calculate they'll have to make in the home, the more concerned they get, and the fewer offers you'll receive.

Let there be light.

People buy space and light. One dark room is "cool". But if the whole house is dark, that's a problem. So open the blinds. Turn on all the lights. Add lights in rooms that are dark.

And if Mother Nature isn't cooperating with your marketing efforts, use more flowers and things that suggest sunlight.

One seller who really understood staging was marketing her home during a spate of bleak weather. Before an open home, she threw a couple of beach towels over the rail of the deck, put up the sun umbrella and set out a jug of iced water and some glasses.



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WHAT'S NEXT?

We're just a call away. Why not call to book your strategy session where we'll discuss the nitty gritty of getting your home prepped to sell at a premium price?

It's probably far easier than you think.

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