



Photography Preparation Checklist

Try to get photos right the first time, and avoid posting your own first!

Once a listing goes live, the photos syndicate to dozens, if not hundreds, of online sites and IDX feeds. These feeds don't always re-syndicate images... meaning if you post poor imagery the first time, you might be stuck showing that imagery to certain clients for good – even if you upload new images!

Keep in mind that just because you see some of your new images on some sites, that doesn't mean every site will update the imagery!

Stage the home.

Staging can be elaborate or simple. Many agents will bring some small decor to place around the home or simply rearrange the furniture. Sometimes what's comfortable for living isn't the best for showing, so don't be shy to rearrange that huge sectional to allow for a better flow. This helps photography immensely as well by making rooms look larger or more inviting.

Some simple things you can do include:

- Adding small decor like candles, plants, place settings on tables.
- Rearranging furniture.
- Removing worn pillows or other daily items.
- Adding cheap stick-under or tap lights under kitchen cabinets.

Hide pet things.

Dog beds, kennels, bones, catnip... they all tend to sneak into shots when you least expect them. Spent some time collecting all these things and hiding them in a hallway closet or the garage. I normally skip shooting both of these spaces, so they make perfect hiding places for pet things.

Replace ALL burnt out lightbulbs.

This one is huge.

In almost every listing we shoot, of any price point, there's sure to be a light bulb or two out. Especially in rooms that are rarely used. During shoots, we don't usually have time to wait for light bulbs to be moved from light to light. And with other services like Matterport or films, we just can't move light bulbs.

BONUS TIP: Make sure all lights use the same *type* of light bulb. You may not notice it, but different light bulbs give off different colors of light. This can effect the final photos in a major way. It could cause a room to look warmer or cooler. It could make a room look both warm and cool, depending on where the bulbs are located. By using the same bulbs or the same type of bulbs, we can get a consistent look for every room which makes for significantly more professional looking images.

Finish all repairs, painting, or upgrades.

This seems obvious, but sometimes in their rush to get a listing online, agents or sellers will have photos done first. It's understandable, but it's much better if these repairs and upgrades are done first to avoid post a sub-par representation of your listing.

Have floors prepared.

If floors need refinishing, cleaning, or carpet needs stretching have this done before photos are taken. Simple things like a carpet cleaning or stretching or even refinishing hardwood floors can make a world of difference in the success of a sale. Even though we can edit almost anything, real estate agents have strict rules about how they present their listings. One of these rules is very specific that you cannot edit features of the home to be more aesthetically pleasing to present on MLS. And, really, would you want people visiting your listing and seeing something markedly different than they were expecting?

Send pets for a spa day!

I love pets. But they also get in the way during shoots. Dogs are too interested in what I'm doing and cats sometimes sneak into shots where I don't even know until I am back and editing. So send them for a spa day or to daycare.

BONUS TIP: If the owners can't or won't take them to day camp, it makes a great opportunity for the owners and pets to head to the park or go for a walk. This get both owners and pets out of the house during the shoot.

Unless it's a cat, in which case I'm not sure how you get owner and pet out together...

Send the sellers out.

If there's no pets and the sellers aren't at work, consider suggesting they go out to lunch or dinner. The more people present, the more likely it is someone will get in a reflection, mirror, or background photo. Having several people on site during a shoot can really slow things down. We can shoot an empty house in 30min to an hour and a full house can sometimes take well over an hour. We typically schedule shoots assuming there will not be many people present.

Hide any personal effects, valuables, guns, or prescriptions.

Guns, jewelry, money, and medicine can make a listing a target. It's best to hide them and not advertise to the entire internet that they are present. There's liability, safety, security, and personal reasons to keep these things out of the house completely, but if you can't, then at least make great effort to get clients to hide them.

Remove personal photos.

Especially in regards to images or names of kids, it's best to try to hide any personal photos that your sellers don't want online for the entire world to see and associate with their address. There's no telling who is looking at a listing online, with or without an agent, so hiding personal images can be a big step to being as safe as possible.

Turn on ALL lights and turn off ALL fans.

Before we arrive to shoot your photos, make sure all lights are on and all fans are off. Lights help the house to look warmer and more welcoming, while turning the fans off prevents having a UFO overing at the top of each room. Additionally, if there's a nice fan with unique details, turning the fan off allows for this to show in the photos!

EXCEPTION TO THE RULE: Some designers like turning all the lights OFF! If that's a look you're working towards, we can do it! Sometimes agents worry that the room will be too dark, but this is rarely the case. We are equipped to shoot your listing the way you want!