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Prepare Your Home for a Virtual Tour

With more buyers shopping for homes on the Web, photos and virtual tours are a must. There are many things you can do make your home shine on camera.

- 1. Understand the camera's perspective.** The camera's eye is very different from the human eye. It magnifies clutter and poor furniture arrangement. To make a home shine in a virtual tour or video presentation, cater to the lens.
- 2. Make the home "Q-tip clean."** Because the camera magnifies grime, each room must be spotless. Don't forget floor coverings and walls; a discolored spot on the rug might be overlooked by prospects during a regular home showing, but that stain becomes a focal point for online viewers.
- 3. Pack up the clutter.** But leave three items of varying heights on each surface. For example, on an end table you can place a lamp (high), a small plant (medium), and a book (low).
- 4. Snap pictures.** This will give you an idea of what the home will look like on camera. Closely examine the photos and list changes that would improve each room's appearance: opening blinds to let in natural light, removing magnets from the refrigerator, or taking down distracting art.
- 5. Pare down furniture.** Identify one or two pieces of furniture that can be removed from each room to make the space appear larger.
- 6. Rearrange.** Spotlight the flow of a 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.
- 7. Reaccessorize.** Include a healthy plant in every room; the camera loves green. Energize bland decor by placing a bright vase on a mantle or draping an afghan over a couch.
- 8. Keep the home in shape.** You want buyers who liked what they saw online to encounter the same home in person.

Source: Barb Schwarz, www.StagedHomes.com, Concord, Pa.