



THE MAXLIFE REALTY SELLER SERIES · 2026

The Pre-Listing Prep & Staging Guide

Repair triage, room-by-room staging, and curb appeal that earns more offers — the Orlando seller's edition.

A 10-PAGE PREP & STAGING GUIDE

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Presentation is the cheapest money you'll ever make

A home that's been prepped and staged sells faster, draws more offers, and closes for more than the identical home next door that wasn't. The work is mostly cheap and almost entirely within your control. This guide is the room-by-room playbook — what to fix, what to skip, and how to make buyers fall in love before they walk through the door.

Nearly all buyers use the internet to search (about 96%, per NAR), so your home is really competing twice: once in the photos, and again in person. Everything below is designed to win both.

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Repair triage

FIX IT, PRICE IT IN, OR SKIP IT

Don't fix everything — fix the right things. Sort every issue into one of three buckets:

BUCKET	WHAT BELONGS HERE	WHY
Fix — deal-killers	Roof at end of life, active leaks, broken HVAC/water heater, electrical hazards, FHA/VA-flagged items	These stop financing and insurance — they'll kill the deal, not just lower it
Fix — cheap & high-ROI	Neutral paint, worn flooring, dated fixtures, caulk, hardware, power-washing	Tiny cost, huge effect on photos and first impressions
Price it in	Kitchen/bath remodels, pool resurfacing, big cosmetic wants	Rarely return their full cost — disclose and reflect in price instead

In Florida specifically: an insurable roof and a working AC sell more homes than any renovation, because they protect the buyer's financing and insurance.

DISCLOSURE IS SEPARATE FROM REPAIR

You can absolutely sell a home with known issues. Florida law (the *Johnson v. Davis* standard) just requires you to *disclose* known material defects that aren't readily observable. Fixing is your choice; disclosing is not.

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Declutter & depersonalize

THE HIGHEST-IMPACT FREE STEP

Start three to four weeks out — it always takes longer than expected. The goal: buyers picturing *their* life in the home, not touring *yours*.

- Clear 30–50% of everything on counters, shelves, and surfaces — you're packing anyway
- Remove family photos, diplomas, religious and political items, collections, and trophies
- Pare closets to half-full so they read as generous; organize the pantry and garage
- Pre-pack bulky or excess furniture so every room shows its true size and flow
- Rent a storage unit if needed — empty space photographs far better than full
- Deep clean once decluttered: floors, baseboards, vents, windows, grout, and especially odors

WIN THE NOSE TEST

Pet, smoke, and cooking odors are deal-breakers buyers rarely mention out loud — they just leave. Neutralize them completely (not with overpowering plug-ins). A clean, neutral-smelling home feels cared for, which buyers translate into a higher price.

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Stage it — room by room WHERE BUYERS FALL IN LOVE

Kitchen

- Clear all but one or two décor items off the counters; nothing in the sink
- Fresh dish towels; a simple bowl of lemons, a plant, or cut greenery
- Wipe down cabinet fronts and appliances to a shine; degrease the range
- Inside the fridge and oven clean too — buyers open everything

Living & family rooms

- Float furniture off the walls to show flow and make the room feel larger
- Define one clear focal point (fireplace, view, or media wall)
- Neutral throw pillows and a folded throw; remove oversized or worn pieces
- Open every blind and curtain — natural light is your best free upgrade

Primary bedroom

- Hotel-style bedding in neutral tones; a made bed in every bedroom
- Nightstands cleared to a lamp and one small item; closet organized and half-empty

- Remove exercise equipment, clutter, and anything that says "storage room"

Bathrooms

- Hide all personal toiletries; set out fresh white towels
- Fresh caulk and clean grout; spotless mirrors, glass, and fixtures
- Toilet lids down; a small plant or rolled towels for a spa feel

Outdoor living — your Florida advantage

- Stage the lanai or pool deck as a destination: clean furniture, clear surfaces, sparkling water
- Pressure-wash the deck and screen enclosure; tidy landscaping and mulch beds
- Add a couple of simple potted plants; remove toys, tools, and hoses

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Curb appeal

THE FIRST PHOTO AND THE FIRST IMPRESSION

- Power-wash the driveway, walkway, exterior, and roof if needed
- Fresh mulch, trimmed hedges, edged beds, healthy or freshly sodded lawn
- Paint or refinish the front door; new house numbers and mailbox if dated
- Clean or replace the welcome mat; two matching potted plants at the entry
- Clean all windows inside and out; clear gutters; confirm every exterior light works

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Photography day

TREAT IT LIKE 1,000 SHOWINGS AT ONCE

Your photos are your storefront. Have everything done *before* the photographer arrives — you can't re-shoot a first impression.

- Confirm professional photography + a 3D Matterport tour (drone/twilight for higher tiers)
- Whole home spotless and fully staged in advance
- Every light on, blinds open, ceiling fans and TVs off, toilet lids down
- Cars out of the driveway; trash and recycling bins out of sight
- Pets, pet bowls, and litter boxes removed; valuables secured

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The one-week sprint

DAY BY DAY BEFORE PHOTOS

DAY	FOCUS
7-6	Finish decluttering & pre-packing; move excess to storage
5-4	Paint touch-ups, fix the cheap visible items, swap dated fixtures
3	Power-wash exterior; landscaping, mulch, and front-door refresh
2	Deep clean the entire home; windows, grout, and odor neutralizing
1	Stage every room; fresh flowers/greenery; final walk-through with fresh eyes
Photo day	Lights on, blinds open, cars gone, pets out — then shoot

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Disclosure checklist

GATHER THESE AS YOU PREP

- Seller's Property Disclosure (known material defects) and the required Florida **flood disclosure**
- HOA/condo rules, fees, and any pending or special assessments
- Permits, surveys, and warranties (roof, HVAC, appliances, termite bond)
- Records of repairs and improvements you've made (supports your price and disclosures)

Staging mistakes that cost offers

- Leaving it cluttered or over-personalized — buyers can't see themselves in it
- Skipping professional photos — the single biggest lead-loss before a showing
- Over-improving with a costly remodel that won't return its cost
- Ignoring odors, or masking them with overpowering air fresheners
- Dark rooms — closed blinds and burned-out bulbs make a home feel small and tired
- Being home for showings — buyers won't linger or fall in love with you watching

Want a walkthrough before you list?

I'll walk your home with you and build a tailored prep punch-list — exactly what to fix, what to skip, and what will return the most for your specific home and price point — plus a free valuation so you know your number.

[Book your free pre-listing consult](#)

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