



Don't Love It? List It!

THE ULTIMATE CHECKLIST OF WHAT
TO FIX AND WHAT TO SKIP TO GET
YOUR HOME ON THE MARKET FAST

HOME[®]
stretch

Every seller wants to get as much out of their home investment as possible as soon as possible.

To increase the chances of attracting buyers, a house needs to look its best.

But where do you even start?

What's worth doing and what can you skip?

To help you through the process, we've created this checklist of tasks that will make a difference in the way the house looks and feels, both in person and in listing photographs.

**IT'S EASY TO GET OVERWHELMED,
THAT'S WHY WE ORGANIZED
THIS CHECKLIST INTO
JUST FIVE CATEGORIES.**



1. Clearing Out

It happens to everyone: When you live in a home, possessions seem to multiply. Unfortunately, uncluttered spaces are more appealing to buyers. Getting rid of excess stuff isn't easy, but doing it first sets the stage for everything that follows. It's super rewarding to see fresh, open space in the house, and you'll save money by not moving things to your new home that you really don't want to keep.

TO-DO CHECKLIST:

- ☐ Remove junk (Depending on the situation, trash bags will do or you might need a dumpster or junk removal service.)
 - ☐ Declutter (Decide what you're keeping and remove the rest.)
 - ☐ Organize donations (Identify organizations that can take items. Deliver them or arrange pick up.)
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TIP: Wondering if you should sell unwanted items? Remember that listing items in online platforms and holding yard sales takes time but could recoup some money. If you decide to donate instead to nonprofit organizations, be sure to ask for a receipt for tax purposes.

WHAT TO SKIP: As you clear items out, you might start to consider big projects like renovating a bathroom or kitchen. These projects typically require a lot of time, which will keep you from getting the home on the market quickly.

Don't invest in extra shelving to organize stuff in the house. It's better to get rid of items or, if necessary, rent a storage unit for a short time while the home is on the market.

2. Interior and Exterior Painting

Now that everything “extra” is cleared out, it’s time to think about adding fresh paint. Besides neutralizing less-popular colors, paint offers several advantages: It gives a modern look; it can be done fairly quickly; and it’s very affordable compared to other improvements. Paint can be applied to walls, trim, ceilings, cabinets, doors and siding. You might consider painting the front door to make a good first impression.

TO-DO CHECKLIST:

- ☐ Assess the condition and color of current finishes
 - ☐ Consider removing wallpaper
 - ☐ Decide on neutral paint colors (See the 2026 paint palette we recommend in our online [Color Book](#).)
 - ☐ Hire professional painters or do it yourself
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TIP: If you plan to replace flooring in the house, be sure to paint prior to having the new flooring installed, or plan to cover new flooring completely during the painting process.

WHAT TO SKIP: Now’s not the time to add new wallpaper, even if you love a particular design. Keep wallcoverings neutral to appeal to most buyers.

Dealing with tired, dated or damaged kitchen cabinetry or bathroom vanities? Instead of replacing them, which is costly, you could revive them with paint.

3. Carpet and Flooring

What's underfoot will be one of the first things buyers notice when they tour a home for sale. If carpet or flooring is showing stains, wear or dated style, consider replacing it. Keep in mind that neutral colors and low-maintenance materials are very appealing to buyers.

TO-DO CHECKLIST:

- ☐ Assess the condition, color and style of current flooring
 - ☐ Consider having newer carpeting professionally steam cleaned
 - ☐ Remove carpet as needed
 - ☐ Replace carpeting or add luxury vinyl plank (LVP) or luxury vinyl tile (LVT) flooring (We show the flooring choices and carpet colors that buyers are looking for in our online [Color Book](#).)
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TIP: Be picky about the condition of current carpets. Cleaning just removes dirt, not old stains, and it doesn't fix holes or excess wear. If buyers think they will have to replace carpet immediately, they may lower their offer or ask for concessions. New carpet can make a home move-in ready, which appeals to many buyers,

WHAT TO SKIP: You don't need to invest in new hardwood flooring when less-expensive materials will provide an attractive look and feel.

Don't waste time and money steam cleaning carpeting with excess wear or old, set-in stains. Replace it instead.

4. Move Out Cleaning

Buyers are looking for a home that looks sparkling clean, smells fresh and is ready for them to move in. Hiring cleaning professionals to work their magic before listing photos are taken and after you're completely moved out is a smart approach. It also saves you time when your schedule is already filled with other tasks.

TO-DO CHECKLIST:

- ☐ Wash windows (Either schedule a window washing service or do it yourself.)
 - ☐ Dust, mop, vacuum, make beds, clean bathrooms and wipe down cabinets to prepare for listing photos and showings
 - ☐ Clean all appliances
 - ☐ Schedule a professional cleaning for after you move out
 - ☐ Clear out the refrigerator
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TIP: When cleaning the home for photos, think about the color and condition of towels, throw pillows and bed coverings. Replace or remove anything that looks worn or is not neutral in color.

WHAT TO SKIP: Don't plan to do the after-move-out cleaning yourself. Most likely your vacuum cleaner and other supplies will already be packed up.

Don't stress about cleaning small appliances; it's better to clear them off the countertops for listing photos anyway.

5. Landscape Clean Up

You only have one chance to make a first impression and curb appeal goes a long way to creating that wow moment for potential buyers. If beds are overgrown or filled with weeds, it will register as an unwanted “to do” for buyers. Colorful flowers near the front entry are also a welcome sight for buyers.

TO-DO CHECKLIST:

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| ☐ Mow | ☐ Consider black-top sealing for the driveway and schedule a service as needed |
| ☐ Weed planting beds | |
| ☐ Trim overgrown plantings | ☐ Sweep porches, entry areas and welcome mats |
| ☐ Clear debris and lay mulch in all beds and around trees | ☐ Wash exterior light fixtures and replace burned-out bulbs as needed |
| ☐ Pressure wash driveway, walkways, patio, deck or fences as needed | ☐ Plant seasonal annuals in beds, containers or windowboxes for added color |
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TIP: Be sure your exterior lighting is in good working condition to show the house at its best after dark. Replace burned-out bulbs or fixtures that no longer work

WHAT TO SKIP: Don't invest in pricey plantings that you won't be able to enjoy for the long run.

Don't add high-maintenance extras like a koi pond or fountain to your yard.



DIY OR GO PRO?

Preparing to put a house on the market is stressful. Every day it's not on the market can feel like time wasted. One way to make the process go faster is to enlist the help of professionals, especially if you live far away from the house you want to sell.

OUR HOMESTRETCH CUSTOMERS OFTEN HAVE QUESTIONS LIKE:

How quickly can a home be ready to be listed?

Once you reach out to HOMEstretch and we are able to schedule a consultation, we will provide a quote within 24 hours of that consultation. When the quote is accepted, our service providers can start work on your project right away. Have your home market-ready within days, not months.

What does it cost?

Your cost will vary based on the size and condition of your home as well as the services you choose. HOMEstretch projects tend to fall in the range of \$2,000 to \$30,000, with an average cost of \$8,000 for a typical job. Remember that there are no upfront costs for homeowners for HOMEstretch services. Fees for the services we provide are deducted from your total sales proceeds at closing.

Can I choose some services and not others?

Yes. When you meet with a HOMEstretch representative, you'll learn more about our services and have the opportunity to choose which would be most beneficial. Your consultation, which is free of charge, allows you to tap into the deep market knowledge of our representatives who are experienced with guiding homeowners through stressful situations.



What's required from me as the current owner?

Very little! It's our goal to take stress and tasks off your plate. If you are available at the house, we look forward to meeting you and developing a good working relationship. If the house for sale is not in your area, we can coordinate our services with a real estate agent. Don't have a real estate agent yet? We can help with that, too.

Do you work with real estate agents?

Yes. We want to be a trusted vendor and partner to real estate agents, but we have no financial relationships with agents. Realtors appreciate our ability to do quality work quickly. They also trust HOMEstretch to expertly guide homeowners in choosing the best improvements to make.

How long does it typically take to get a house on the market?

The timeline depends on the level of services required, but, on average, we need just five to seven working days to have a house ready to list.

How does the payment at closing work?

We work with Notable to finance the home improvements, up to \$75,000. At closing, any funds spent on the project through HOMEstretch are deducted by the title company as a line item on your closing statement.



Can you handle my punch-out items after an inspection?

Generally, we only perform handyman tasks when they are accompanied by our core services (painting, flooring, or clear outs). We focus on cosmetic improvements that help increase the appeal of your home, like light fixture swaps, hanging new mirrors or baseboard repair.

Do you do electrical or plumbing work?

No. We specialize in high-impact, cosmetic work. We don't handle structural issues, roofing, plumbing, electrical or major renovations to ensure we remain the fastest solution in the market.

Are you stagers?

No, we specialize in home prep. That's the essential step before staging. We handle the big improvements like walls and floors, which gives the stager a clean, neutral canvas.

Why should I invest money in a house I am leaving?

Today's first-time homebuyers often don't want to take on projects; they want to move in, hang up a TV and feel at home immediately. Neutralized homes sell best because they allow buyers to imagine themselves in the space. By focusing on walls, ceilings and floors — which make up 90 percent of what a buyer sees — we help you maximize your sales price and reduce time on the market.



Do you handle the design and color choices for me?

Absolutely. We take the guesswork out of the process by offering clear, confident recommendations based on what is currently working in the market. We have curated color palettes in our HOMEstretch Color Book based on fresh, neutral designs that appeal to a wide range of buyers. Our flooring tiers also match your home's specific price point and style.

Can I use HOMEstretch if I am still living in the home?

Yes, we frequently work with live-in clients. We make it a priority to walk you through exactly what to expect each step of the way to minimize stress. For live-in situations, we can work with you on a project plan to get the project done quickly without overwhelming your daily life



WHY CHOOSE HOMESTRETCH?

Do you want your home to be clean, inviting and market-ready?

Are you hoping to attract potential buyers and maximize the home's value?

The team at HOMEstretch is here to make selling a home easier. We help eliminate the stress of home improvements that come along with moving, downsizing, dealing with a loved one's estate or transitioning to an assisted living home.



WE OFFER

- One point of contact to simplify the process.
- Caring, experienced team members who understand the challenges you're facing.

To learn more about our services, see our before-and-after gallery, and find a local HOMEstretch provider, visit home-stretch.com

