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*A Guide for Home Vendors*

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# 51 LOW & NO COST HOME IMPROVEMENT TIPS

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**T**he purpose of 51 Low & No Cost Home Improvement Tips is not to insult, but to identify several inexpensive measures that you, as a homeowner, can carry out to improve the physical condition of your home before placing it up for sale. In fact, you may even chuckle while reading this guide, but don't take its suggestions lightly because doing so could result in a long, frustrating selling cycle and net you a less-than-satisfactory selling price!

## **EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS**

1. Rake leaves, mow lawns and keep edges neatly trimmed. Lawns and flowers should be weeded regularly and trees and shrubs should be pruned and trimmed as well.
2. Remove old lawn mowers, tractors, disabled vehicles, broken lawn ornaments, topless tables, armless lawn furniture and seatless chairs; they're reasons for a buyer to make a U-turn.
3. Hoses should be coiled or placed inconspicuously when not being used and other garden equipment should be stored in some type of shelter also when not in use..
4. A yard should be free from unnecessary clutter and a place should be provided for children's toys and equipment. All animal litter should be removed DAILY.
5. Ensure the garage door opens and closes easily. House and garage doors should be free from finger marks. Wood surfaces should be kept painted, oiled or stained.
6. Porches, steps, verandas, balconies, patios and other extensions of the home must be uncluttered, clean and repaired.
7. Shades and awnings in good repair with colours unfaded will improve exterior house appearance.
8. Keep garbage cans deodorized and out of sight or placed inconspicuously.
9. Walks and entrances should be well maintained and free from excess water, ice and snow. Put some crushed stone on walkways and driveways that turn muddy when it rains and fill in any potholes.
10. Keep gates, fences, walls and outer buildings repaired and painted.

11. Outdoor furniture should be kept clean, firewood should be properly stacked and barbecue grills should be clean.
12. Keep metal accessories (door knobs, door knockers, lamps, etc.) clean and polished.
13. Attach the downspouts to the gutters and point, if needed. Any loose roof shingles, tiles, etc. should also be secured or repaired.
14. Paint the front, back and side entrance doors; nothing looks worse than a peeling door.
15. If the fence is falling apart, so will the sale. Get rid of it or replace it.
16. If the mailbox is covered with graffiti, dents and scratches, replace it..
17. Remove the half-dozen, slightly tilted, multicoloured "For Sale" signs.
18. Store air coolers neatly away when not in use.
19. If you are neither prepared to nor want to spend hundreds of dollars for exterior painting, be ready to make an immediate price adjustment, or listen to everyone who views the home say, "It will cost a fortune to have the house painted!" If you can afford it, the money spent tidying up will be well worth the investment. Use appropriate colours.
20. Replace all broken chimney bricks or stones. Paint all dirty chimneys (not on the inside, please).
21. If the roof leaks, fix it! Remove any or all evidence of leakage by whatever means possible.

## **INTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS**

1. Wash all windows inside and out and ensure curtains and drapes are fresh and attractive.
2. Open all drapes and pull up shades to let all that wonderful sunshine in.
3. Remove all bugs, flies and dirt from light bulbs / fixtures.
4. Install higher watt light bulbs in all fixtures for brighter lighting.
5. If any toilet bowl in your home has an unremovable stain, replace it (this applies to the one in the basement that is seldom used).
6. If possible, send all cats, dogs, parrots, hamsters and pet monkeys to your sister or brother-in-law from the day your home goes on the market until the day it is sold, and get rid of the odors that are left behind. (Over fifty percent of home purchasers are either allergic to, afraid of or simply dislike animals.)

7. Clear all rubbish out of all fireplaces, particularly those that have not been lit in the past two years!
8. Put two coats of off-white paint over purple, orange, yellow and dark coloured walls. (One coat will also work wonders on all the other walls that are dirty as well.)
9. Clean ovens and burner trays inside out.
10. Fix the front doorbell, storm door and front entry (first impressions are lasting).
11. Shampoo carpets and rugs.
12. Replace old washers in dripping faucets.
13. Replace old shower curtains.
14. Remove junk from the attic, basement, closets and tool shed and have a really successful garage sale. Then place all unsold items on the street curb for the next garbage pick-up.
15. Organize ALL closets.
16. Turn off all blaring stereo systems and t.v. sets while the home is being shown. An atmosphere filled with soft music is the way to go.
17. If you cannot salvage a dying plant, get rid of it.
18. Adjust all doors, including closets and windows, so they can be opened and closed easily without squeaking.
19. Dust, clean and scrub EVERYTHING from attic to basement.
20. Replace broken tiles on walls and floors and repaste loose or dangling wallpaper.
21. Make beds and keep all clothing (except those that you're currently wearing) out of sight at all times.
22. Keep kitchen countertop and sinks clean and clear at all times.
23. Ensure all banisters and handrails are secured.
24. Remove all posters and adhesives from walls and doors (don't forget to patch up and repaint over those tack holes).
25. With regard to the basement, paint floor and walls as required. Furthermore, if basement shows signs of any water or structural problems, obtain a structural engineer's report and prepare to make amends.

26. Improve the plumbing system and piping to increase water pressure throughout your home, if pressure is bad.
27. Remove worn out wall-to-wall carpeting, providing base floors are either hardwood or wide board and are in fairly good condition. Buff and clean floors. Otherwise, replace carpeting if necessary (choose from neutral colour selections).
28. Remove excess extension cords and exposed wires to lamps and fixtures.
29. Replace all broken screens, cracked window panes, faulty light fixtures, loose basement stair steps or anything else not in good condition.
30. Last, but not least, Smile.

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If you need further explanation on the foregoing or have any question regarding real estate, please feel free to call me for assistance.

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