

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR PHOTOGRAPHY • VIDEO

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see some of my favourite shots here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/79102153@N02/>

IT'S ALL IN THE PREP

"I'm a photographer, not a miracle worker"

[to paraphrase Miracle Max, the Princess Bride]

The more effort you put into preparation the better the photos will be. Will this translate to a quicker sale at a higher price? Well it certainly won't hurt your chances. Your photos are your buyers' first impression of a property: make it a great first impression and that positive emotion will stay with them...

FIRST, CHANGE YOUR HEADSPACE

It may be difficult, and often a wrench, but you need to stop thinking of your property as your home, and start thinking of it as a commodity you want to sell. One useful approach is to imagine that you are letting the property fully furnished. In that case you would want to clear out all of the personal objects - and leave just a few of the best knick-knacks and pictures. Clutter makes a space feel small - and this is magnified in photos.

1. MOW THE LAWN!

If you don't do anything else, this has got to be the single most important thing to take care of. I can't overstate what a difference this makes - both in the photos and in subsequent viewings.

2. THE LEAD SHOT

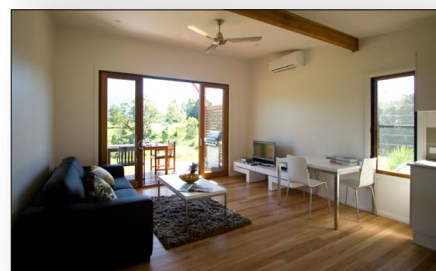
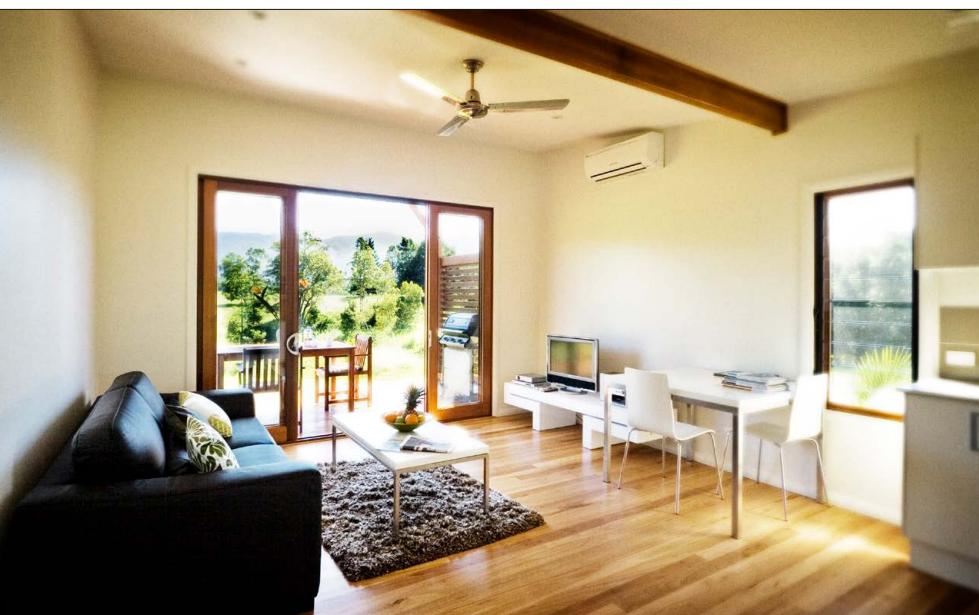
Mow the lawn at least at the front of the house or its best aspect - whichever will be the poster shot for your property. Clear away bikes and boots, lawnmowers, toys, hoses and cars. Cast a critical eye at things that may have become part of the furniture - Mouldy gutters? Enormous Cobwebs? If you have time mulch weedy garden beds, prune trees and bushes that might obscure a view or a view of your house. Move the bins! (into the garage?).

3. TIDYING MORE IMPORTANT THAN CLEANING (BUT CLEANING STILL GOOD)

- Make sure surfaces - table tops and benches have nothing on them except for the occasional functional or decorative object.
- Make sure the floors are free from kids toys - and big kids toys.
- Remove personal photos bean bags, and pet beds and toys, and other items sitting on the floor.
- If you have a lot of knick-knacks, as a rule of thumb remove half of them, and then half of the remainder as well!
- Put a couple of bouquets of flowers around the house
- Spend more time on your best rooms. Leave cleaning of windows with no views till last.

*Not sure where to start?
Talk to your agent!*

Accommodation providers: Uncluttered lounge - A bowl of fruit, newspaper, breakfast setting outside, a few books. You could also add a beach bag, towel, an item of clothing - to



The digital negative (above) - see our faq on processing.

4. ROOM BY ROOM

Front door: Remove shoes and boots and knick knacks (see 6). The main rooms in order of importance:-

Living room/lounge: (do you have views out of your windows? Make sure they are clean!) Remove TV remotes, magazines, personal stuff. If you have a well loved but tatty piece of furniture, remove it if possible. If you have views, take down net curtains! Fluff the cushions, remove the faded or tatty ones.

Kitchen: all surfaces clear and clean. Bowls of fruit and veg are fine, Piles of post, keys, spare change, washing up - not! Take fridge magnets and post-its off the fridge, and give it a quick clean. **I mean it, yes! Take everything off your fridge.** Remove utensil holders and appliances from counter-tops (unless you have some funky ones). Remove the bin.

Dining Room: Take EVERYTHING off the table, then put a bowl of fruit, bunch of flowers, or teaset etc in the middle. Straighten all chairs and space them evenly.

Master Bedroom: Make your bed like you've never made it before. Its going on the web, folks! Clear up all personal items. The odd book, and framed picture are fine. Chuck stuff in your closet, not under the bed (to check whether stuff under the bed can be seen, get on your knees - I often shoot from this height). Bonus points for ironing bed linens and bed skirts. Stand back and look: are there messy leads/chargers?

Bathroom: Clean! Don't leave your bathmat hanging up. Remove everything from counter tops. Remove everything from the shower. A couple of nice towels hanging neatly is fine. Replace old shower curtains. Glass shower Soap scum: Easy-Off Barn Grime & Soap Scum works with elbow grease - but you may need several applications. CLR cleaner works wonders.

Other Bedrooms: Put more effort into any rooms with views, or bigger rooms. Kids rooms - if we can see the floor this is a big bonus :)

Verandah & Back Yard: Remove dog beds and Webbers/BBQ's - unless they are out and shiny. They look horrible covered. Remove pool vacuum/cleaner hose. Hide pool cleaning supplies. Turn on pool fountains/water features. Remove hoses and hose reels. Mulch and tidy garden beds.

Yes I photograph every room - if any are missing buyers might not know they exist - or suspect the worse.

5. BE READY!

If you are cleaning or clearing as I work you wont get the best results. Please don't think you can move things as I go from room to room, it will ensure I'm not focussed and have less time to do my job!

6. WHERE TO PUT YOUR STUFF?

In the laundry and garage. I rarely photograph the laundry. I will often photograph the garage - but they are not glamour shots - people will not mind a bit of mess.

A FEW GENERAL POINTS

Photography needs light! The rooms should feel bright and airy: Make sure all curtains and shutters are open, blinds are open. Please try to ensure this is done before I arrive - 10 minutes spent opening all the blinds is 10 minutes spent not on the job! If I'm shooting in your absence, its essential this is done before - I won't force a sticky blind: I've broken a few! Now is the time to fix or remove broken blinds or curtains that wont open!

- Don't expect digital removal of items. It can take hours; removal via your digits is often very much quicker!
- Be realistic about what can be achieved: if you have trees 2 metres away from the front of your property, don't expect to see a shot of the front that doesn't feature trees!

Let me get on with it! I'm a friendly chap, but you'll get the best results if you take the dog for a walk, or go out to lunch!



A QUICK SUMMARY

- ➔ **Mow the lawn!**
- ➔ **Tidy up the front yard**
- ➔ **Get rid of clutter and personal effects**
- ➔ **Make your bed like a ninja**
- ➔ **Tidy up the house like the queen is visiting**
- ➔ **Sunshine is very good! Are we able to reschedule if it's cloudy or raining?**
- ➔ **Is it all too much? Ask us about cleaners that are photo-shoot savvy!**

BUT WAIT THERE'S MORE...

Don't hang your laundry on photo day!

Do you have trees right outside windows? Prune to let some light in!

Remove your tea towels from the oven! Remove cloths from sink. Hide your dish rack unless it's pretty. Put the soap away.

Open the doors of the rooms you want me to photograph (unless you want me opening all your cupboards!). Tell me about rooms that might not be obvious.

Tidy up, remove the clutter - I am much more likely to move a few things to get the perfect picture, but I wont tidy up first.



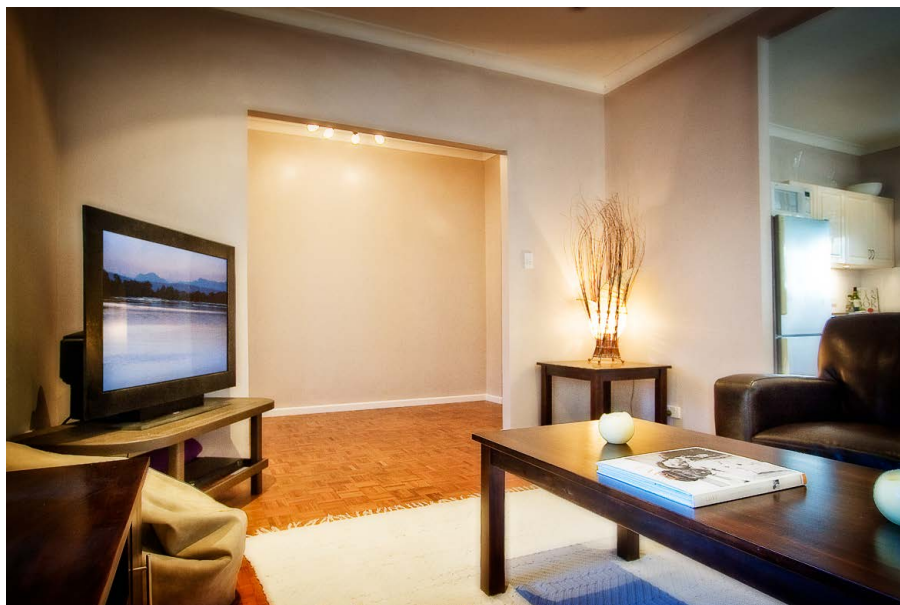
Not so Ninja front yard

Ninja Bed!



ps. Mow the lawn!

PREPARATION: REAL ESTATE EXAMPLES



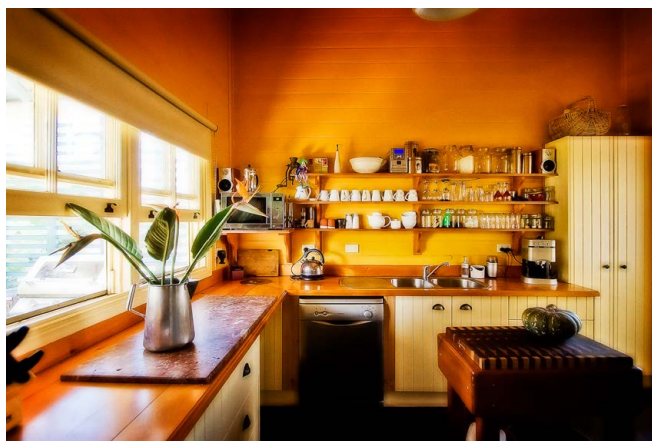
Minimal but lived in: contemporary interior design matched by contemporary homewares and a complementary coffee table book. I could point the camera anywhere in this room and get a great shot!



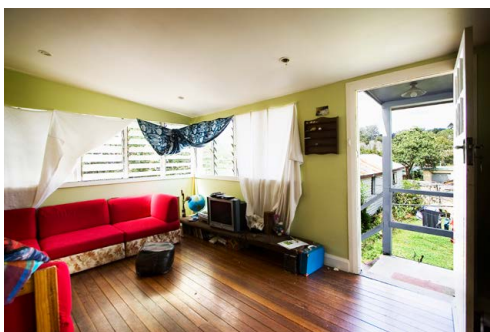
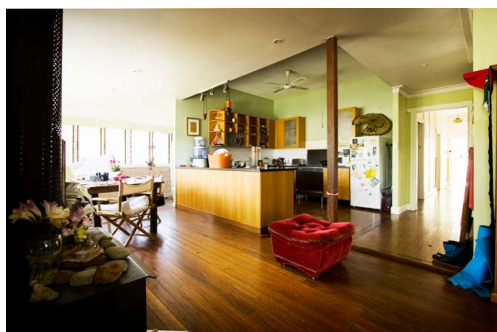
A splash of green on the table, fruit in a fruit bowl, quality olive oil on the counter - all things you'd expect to find in this style of kitchen.



A busier style of decor, but minimal knick-knacks and clutter add to the bohemian feel of this home.



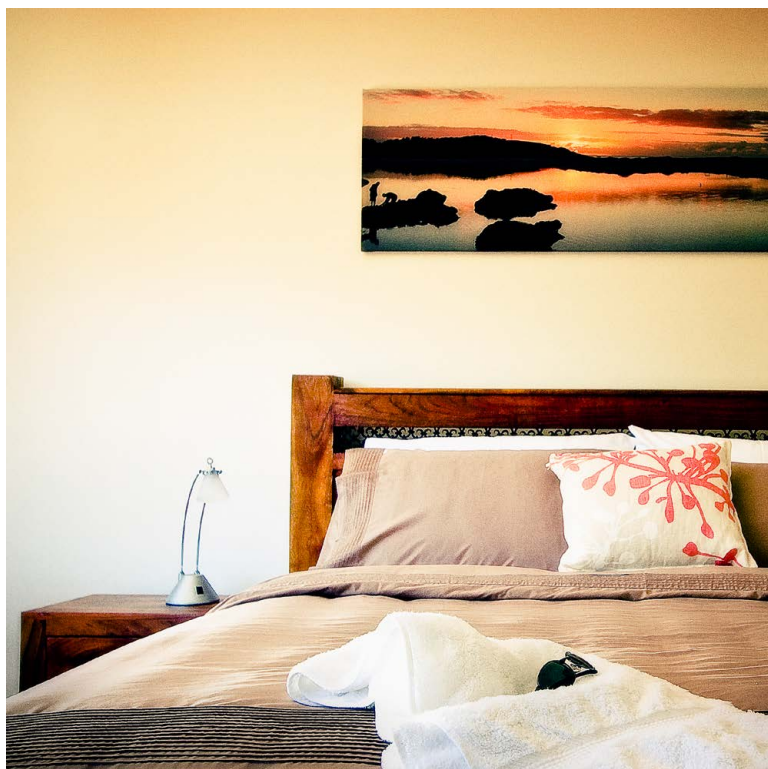
Very different to the kitchen above, but similarly filled with objects you'd expect to find in a more rustic cosy living space.



A challenging home! I don't shoot many like this!

(Usually it's when the home is tenant occupied, we can give advice about this situation, too).

PREPARATION: EXAMPLES



This shot was taken for an accommodation provider: in real estate personal items are generally not a good idea, but personally, I think with a shot like this it adds to the atmosphere.



Picking out your best pieces of furniture, and clear away everything else!



Imagine this shot without the flowers.



The decor might not be to everyone's taste but its wonderfully consistent!



This cluttered kitchen in a \$1.2m property severely reduces the shooting options.