



# 7 home fixes you must complete before selling

Prioritize the projects that will bring the most value



by [Cara Ameer](#) |  |  | Jul 18, 2016

## Key Takeaways

- Fix it to sell.
- Structural is just as important as cosmetic.
- Give the buyers what they want -- create the "wow" factor.



The process of getting a property ready to put on the market can seem daunting enough. There's [clearing the clutter](#), endless amounts of cleaning, organizing and scrutinizing your property with a fine-tooth comb. What needs attention and what can you leave alone?

Welcome to the new world of "fixing to sell." Gone are the days of throwing it on the market and seeing what happens. Prepping for sale is a highly choreographed dance of repair along with a bit of renovation and presentation.

Don't ignore these seven areas.

## 1. **Structural and mechanical**

It might not be glamorous, but buyers are looking at [big-ticket items](#) like the age and condition of the roof, [air conditioning and heating systems](#), water heater, electrical panel and pipes.

Now, I'm not saying all have to be replaced, but if any of these components are on their last leg, you might seriously need to consider replacing them as these items could factor into the kind of financing the buyer is able to obtain as well as [insurability of the property](#).

Appraisers are notorious for requiring a roof to be replaced, for example, as a condition of a loan when it comes to [FHA and VA financing](#).

Replacing a roof that is at the end of its life before putting your home on the market will go a long way to solidifying buyer confidence in deciding to [make an offer](#).

The buyer (and you) won't have to sweat what an [inspector](#) says, deal with a potential renegotiation before closing or face a price reduction. The last thing you want to be

# Putting a new roof on your sold house in the midst of moving out would be a nightmare.

If you lack the budget to replace these items, get estimates on the cost involved to replace. You can always offer to contribute to the replacement cost in the form of a credit to the buyer's [closing costs](#) and offer [a home warranty](#) that can provide some coverage should something fail or need repair.

## 2. Exterior

How does the exterior of your home look? Is there any wood rot? When was the last time it was painted? Are there any [stucco cracks](#) that need attention?

[First impressions start from the outside](#), and the exterior will show up in photos across a multitude of websites, etc. This is definitely an area worth spending the money.

## 3. Landscaping

Speaking of the exterior, [how does your landscaping look?](#) Are the plantings overgrown, worn and wilted? What about the ground cover?

Are the planting beds in need of some fresh mulch, pine straw, rock, etc.? Are there any overgrown tree limbs hanging over the house or blocking the home's view? For a relatively inexpensive investment, you can transform how your exterior looks by trimming back and freshening things up with [new plants and landscaping](#).

## 4. Cosmetic

Let's face it: buyers buy with their eyes, so now is the time to go through the interior in detail. Are there dents and dings on the walls, scratched moldings or worn paint? Now



Pick light, neutral and on-trend colors. Choose a neutral palette that will transition well with any buyer's furniture.

## **Buyers buy with their eyes, so now is the time to go through the interior in detail.**

Look at your [light fixtures, ceiling fans and light switches](#) — these are relatively inexpensive things to update and replace, yet they go a long way toward creating value.

The [front door](#)? This is critical! Does it need [a fresh coat of paint or new hardware](#)? Consider adding a glass panel to create light that evokes a sunny and warm space.

### **5. Kitchen**

This area is always [huge with buyers](#). Even if the buyers barely know how to boil water, they always envision themselves in the kitchen cooking and entertaining or perhaps auditioning to be the next Food Network TV star surrounded by sleek appliances and cabinetry.

Here's where you need to give them the look for less. Think [new hardware on cabinets](#), adding or changing out a dated tile backsplash and updating appliances. Also, consider changing out counters — you might be able to find a reasonably price remnant of a granite slab.

### **6. Bathrooms**

Simple and clean rules the day. [Sprucing up your bathrooms](#) to sell can be as simple as having the grout on the existing tile steam cleaned or regrouting where needed.



## 7. Flooring

What you walk on creates value. If you can only afford to make the investment in one significant part of your home, consider updating the flooring. There are a ton of low-cost options to choose from that include wood plank tiles and highly upgraded laminate flooring — think wide plank, light colored or hand-scraped styles.

New flooring can totally transform the look of your space and give it the “wow” factor that buyers desire.

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**New flooring can transform the look of your space and give it the ‘wow’ factor that buyers desire.**

In undertaking for sale preparation, strike a delicate balance between what to fix and what to leave alone, but in the end, make the right improvements that will result in a faster sale for top dollar.

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