

- 17. TAKE FURNITURE DOWN A NOTCH** to make rooms appear larger. Remove all the leaves from your dining room table. Move large, overstuffed chairs to spare rooms or storage and replace them with smaller side chairs. Rearrange furniture so that doorways are not obstructed.
- 18. REFINISH OLD HARDWOOD FLOORS** to make them look new. Use a medium stain that will compliment any décor.
- 19. REPLACE LAMINATE COUNTERTOPS.** Granite countertops are half the price they were just four years ago, yet they still add a luxurious feel that buyers crave. Choose a medium grade, neutral colored granite to see the highest return.
- 20. UPDATE CABINET HARDWARE.** Choose a style befitting the rest of the home in a finish that coordinates with light fixtures and appliances.



Warnings:



Before making improvements to the outside of your home, review neighborhood deed restrictions. Major improvements and paint colors may have to be approved by your home owner's association.



Choose quality, but don't go overboard. To see maximum return on your investment, only do improvements that bring your home up to the neighborhood standard. Anything more will be money lost.



Stick with cosmetic repairs. Unseen improvements, like radiant barriers and new water heaters, do not add as much perceived value to a buyer.

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Fix Up to Sell



20 Inexpensive Ways to Add Value to Your Home

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When deciding where to put your home improvement dollars, look to the exterior of your home first. If buyers like what they see on the outside, they'll be eager to view the inside. The reverse is also true.

1. **PAINT** the home in a clean, neutral color that compliments your brick or stone, and highlights key architectural features.
2. **PRUNE** back trees and shrubbery to maximize visibility of the home from the street. Remove unsightly vegetation such as overgrown vines, tree stumps and weeds.
3. **POWER WASH** the exterior of the home, front and back porches, deck, driveway and walkways.
4. **CLEAN AND REPAIR GUTTERS.** Replace gutters that are rusted or beyond repair.
5. **CLEAN ROOF AND REPAIR SHINGLES.** An attractive roof makes such a difference in the overall appearance of a home.

Dirty or damaged roofs make a home look neglected.

6. UPDATE PORCH LIGHTS AND HOUSE NUMBERS.

The front of the home should be



well lit and the house number easy to spot. Choose lighting fixtures that play up the architectural style of your home.

7. **REPAIR DAMAGED SIDING AND SHUTTERS** and touch up paint where needed.
8. **REVIVE AN OLD FRONT DOOR WITH A COAT OF PAINT.** If in doubt about color, match the shade already in use on your shutters or garage door.
9. **WASH ALL WINDOWS AND SCREENS.** Replace torn or missing screens.
10. **INVEST IN A NEW MAILBOX.** Choose one that's style and quality is in keeping with others in the neighborhood.

Resist the temptation to over-improve the interior of your home. These simple upgrades will add value without breaking the bank.

11. **HAVE CARPETS PROFESSIONALLY CLEANED.** If a carpet is badly stained, smelly or outdated, replace with a mid-range carpet in a neutral color. Save money by reusing carpet padding when possible.
12. **DEODORIZE UPHOLSTERY** if you have pets. You may think the house smells



fine, but a buyer without pets will immediately detect any animal odors.

13. **PAINT** interior walls in light, neutral tones. Touch up painted trim. If paint is faded or yellowed, trim should be repainted.
14. **REMOVE OR COVER WALLPAPER** that is outdated, busy, faded, or peeling.
15. **UPDATE LIGHTING FIXTURES.** You'll be amazed out how this subtle change affects the feel of a room. Swap out yellowed or damaged wall plates with new ones.
16. **PAINT CABINETS OR REPLACE DOORS** to give a tired kitchen a facelift. Minor improvements to the kitchen will bring more value than any other room in the house.