

YOUR HOME

TIPS AND TRENDS TO HELP MAXIMIZE HOME BUYING AND SELLING

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No detail left uncovered.



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ROLL OUT THE WELCOME MAT

The last thing you want to do when selling your house is to clean it before — and after — an open house. Keeping your house in top shape is important when showing it to potential buyers, but seasonal rain, snow and mud can wreak havoc on your spit-spot floors and recently cleaned carpeting. Instead of letting potential buyers bring the outside in, keep it tidy and save cleaning time by following these simple tips:

- Plow your driveway as soon as possible after a snowstorm. Sprinkle salt, sand or birdseed on the ground to keep it clear and prevent guests from slipping.
- Keep muddy footprints at bay by offering a welcome mat at the front door. This will prompt potential buyers to wipe their feet before stepping on your newly cleaned carpet or floors.
- Offer potential buyers an umbrella stand near the front door for wet shoes, umbrellas and bulky coats.
- If all else fails, a friendly sign on the door reminding guests to wipe their feet or remove their shoes may be just the ticket.



PLUG THE ENERGY LEAK

You may have noticed that energy bill creeping higher and higher lately. If you live in a larger or older home, your energy costs could be pushing your budget to its limits. Luckily, there are a few easy ways to reduce energy waste.

Warm air leaking into your house in the summer and out of your house in the winter can waste a lot of your energy dollars. New windows, while an investment, are the best way to cut your energy costs. Storm windows with double panes minimize airflow to and from your house. Also look into specific coatings on windows. A gas-filled window with low-emissive coatings reduces heat loss; spectrally selective coatings reduce heat gain.

Next, check on your home's insulation. Topping off your insulation can be a fast and cost-efficient trick to reduce expenses. Inspect the insulation in your attic, ceilings, exterior and interior walls, floors and crawl spaces. If you find an opening or crack to the outside, you can caulk, seal and weather-strip all of the gaps.

If you panic when the energy bill arrives in the mail, don't just take it — take action. Keep these tips in mind and successfully ensure your house gets the most out of the rising energy costs this year.