



10 THINGS THAT ARE DRAGGING DOWN YOUR HOME'S VALUE

There are a lot of things you can't control in the home-selling process. You can't force people to come see your home or make an offer on it. But you can make sure to take care of some easy repairs that would otherwise turn off prospective buyers. Look around and make sure you haven't ignored any of these 10 repairs that can make a buyer think twice about your asking price.

1. Paint colors that just don't blend in

The color of your home is one of the first things a buyer will notice. If it's a very different color from your neighborhood or general area, you should paint it something more innocuous. Most buyers don't want to live in the only pink house in town. The same goes for the interior. If your living room is bright orange, paint over it. Choose a neutral color so buyers can project their own ideas onto it.

2. A front door that's not inviting

The front door is one of the next things a buyer will notice. If the door is flimsy, cheap, or outdated, it'll discourage the buyer before it's even opened. Spring for a new one—it's the most reliable update you can perform to recoup your cost.

3. A busted doorbell

While you're at it, don't forget the doorbell! Having one that works with a friendly, crisp chime is a sign that your house has been well taken care of.

4. Tattered window and door screens

Buyers will notice screens that look more like Swiss cheese than insect shields. You don't necessarily have to spring for a whole new set—just grab some screen repair patches (they're cheap) and fill in the tears.

5. Depressing landscaping

As potential buyers drive up to your home, they'll notice everything—the trees, the grass, the rock pathway, and the plants out front. And it matters. If your lawn is home to a half-dead tree, yellowing grass, unkempt shrubs, and a pathway swallowed by weeds, you might get more lowball offers than you anticipated. Keep the plants trimmed and the grass freshly cut. Make sure the walkway is clear and fallen branches are removed from the lawn. A fresh layer of mulch will brighten up the outside, too.

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6. An unpleasant smell of...something

Nothing can turn a buyer off faster than the stench of faded cigarettes or poorly trained pets. Of course, it's hard for us to smell our homes after we've lived in them for a while, so ask a diplomatic friend to sniff your place. If it stinks, start cleaning.

7. Eerie dripping sounds

If potential buyers hear a dripping faucet or running toilet when touring the house, they might start questioning the building's integrity or the seller's level of care. These are quick DIY fixes that shouldn't go ignored.

8. Bad lighting

Replace harsh lights with bulbs that have a softer glow. Clean out light fixtures to get rid of dirt or dead bugs that can mute the lighting (not to mention look gross).

9. Squeaky hinges

Doors that groan when they open are for horror movies, not homes for sale. Grab a lubricant (such as white lithium grease, but in a pinch you can use cooking oil) and grease the hinges to stop the squeak.

10. An outdated kitchen

Completely renovating a kitchen can get real expensive, real fast. Keep it simple by adding a fresh coat of paint. Although we did say you should keep paint colors neutral, here's where you can try something more inviting—like pale yellow, a color we associate with light and joy. Switch out old cabinet knobs and handles for something fresher like nickel cup pulls.

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