From *Chaos* to Calm™

THE 5-STEP APPROACH TO RIGHT-SIZING

How to Prep Your Long-Time Home for Selling

Know what buyers notice, what to fix, and what to leave alone before you spend a dollar.

A companion to Livin' the Dream and the From Chaos to Calm™ method.

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First, let’s take the pressure off

A long-time home contains more than furniture. There are school photos, half-finished projects, drawers no one has opened in years, and rooms that still work perfectly well for you. Preparing to sell can feel personal because it is.

This guide gives you an order of operations. It helps you decide what to keep, what to fix, what to leave alone, and when to bring in help. Start months ahead if you can. Even if your timeline is shorter, the same priorities apply.

You do not need to empty the house, renovate every room, or decide to list next month. You need a sensible starting point.





THE FIVE-PART PATH

Get clear • Look at the house • Sort belongings • Choose the work • Prepare for market

Buyers notice more than the décor

When buyers compare homes, they are asking two questions at once: “Can I picture my life here?” and “What will I need to deal with after I move in?” Your preparation should answer both.

CONDITION BUILDS CONFIDENCE

A dripping tap, stained ceiling or stuck door may be small on its own. Several visible problems can make a buyer wonder what else has been deferred. Address genuine issues, document the work and be candid about what remains.

SPACE NEEDS TO MAKE SENSE

Buyers need to see how rooms function and how furniture fits. Clear pathways and intentional layouts can make a home easier to understand without stripping it of its character.

THE FIRST IMPRESSION STARTS ONLINE

Most buyers will see photos before they book a visit. Clean windows, good light, a clear entrance and thoughtful photography help your home earn a closer look.

THE RIGHT WORK DEPENDS ON YOUR COMPETITION

A buyer comparing several similar properties will notice the differences. We look at your likely buyer, competing listings, condition and price position before recommending where to spend time or money.

My job is to help you prioritize. I will tell you what I would do first, what can wait, and when the cost or disruption is unlikely to make sense. The plan is specific to your home and your market, not a generic “paint everything grey” checklist.

STEP ONE

GET CLEAR ON THE MOVE

Write down what is prompting the move: less maintenance, fewer stairs, a different community, releasing equity, proximity to family, or a different pace of life. Then identify what the next home must have. The sale preparation should serve that destination.

START WITH THESE QUESTIONS

- What would improve in daily life if you moved?
- Which rooms or belongings matter most to you?
- What must your next home offer?
- What timeline would feel manageable?

LOOK AT BOTH SIDES OF THE MOVE

If you are also buying, explore what your next home would cost and whether it meets your needs. The market for your current house can be very different from the market for a bungalow, condo or townhome. Decide on buy-first or sell-first timing before setting a listing date.

If you are uncertain about moving, that is useful information. A preparation conversation can help you decide whether to move, renovate or stay.





STEP TWO

LOOK AT YOUR HOME WITH FRESH EYES

Walk from the street to the front door, then through each room as though visiting for the first time. Note condition, light, function and anything that distracts from the space. This is an observation exercise, not a verdict on how you have lived.

MAKE THREE LISTS

- **Must address:** leaks, safety concerns, moisture, broken fixtures, strong odours and obvious damage.
- **Worth evaluating:** tired paint, worn flooring, dated lighting, landscaping and unfinished small jobs.
- **Probably leave:** costly cosmetic updates the next owner may replace anyway.

GATHER A HOME INFORMATION FOLDER

- Ages of roof, heating, cooling, windows and appliances; warranties and service records.
- Permits, survey, floor plans and invoices for substantial work, if available.
- Tax, utility and rental equipment details; a factual list of known issues.

Find a significant problem? Get qualified advice and discuss how it should be handled with your Realtor® and lawyer. Do not cover it with paint or furniture.

STEP THREE

SORT BELONGINGS ONE DECISION AT A TIME

The goal is to make daily living easier, allow buyers to understand the rooms, and avoid packing things you do not want in your next home. It is not to erase your life from the house.

FIVE DESTINATIONS

- **Keep:** useful and meaningful items that fit the next space.
- **Keep for now:** sentimental items that need more time; date the box.
- **Give:** ask family what they actually want and set a pickup date.
- **Sell or donate:** set a deadline so piles do not become permanent.
- **Recycle or dispose:** check local rules for special materials.

A WEEKLY RHYTHM

Choose one small zone, set a 30 to 60 minute timer and finish it. Start with storage and duplicates, then little-used rooms. Save photographs, keepsakes and family papers for a less rushed day.

Before photos or showings, secure medication, valuables, financial papers, keys and anything else you prefer to keep private.





STEP FOUR

SPEND ON THE WORK THAT MATTERS

You are helping buyers see a cared-for property and understand the rooms. Make a short, costed work list with a person responsible and a target date.

USUALLY WORTH DOING FIRST

- Fix dripping taps, loose handles, sticking doors and broken lights.
- Deep clean kitchen, baths, floors, windows and vents; address odours at the source.
- Trim landscaping, clear the path and make the entrance welcoming.
- Touch up scuffs; give every room a clear use and easy circulation.

PAUSE BEFORE SPENDING HEAVILY

- A full kitchen or bathroom renovation solely for resale.
- Replacing serviceable flooring without reviewing competing homes.
- Buying décor before you have a presentation plan.

Overwhelmed? I can help coordinate the right people for cleaning, repairs, painting, organizing or staging as needed. We agree on the priorities and scope first; you do not have to manage every job alone.

STEP FIVE

READY FOR PHOTOS, SHOWINGS AND THE MOVE

Complete chosen repairs before deep cleaning, and clean before photography. Coordinate the order so you are not doing the same job twice.

BEFORE PHOTOGRAPHY

- Clear counters enough to show useful space.
- Open window coverings and check the lights.
- Make beds, straighten furniture and hide cords, bins and excess toiletries.
- Discuss what should appear in photos, especially private items.

BEFORE EACH SHOWING

- Secure medication, valuables and documents; arrange pet care.
- Wipe kitchen and bath surfaces, empty bins and attend to odours.
- Agree on notice, showing windows and privacy needs in advance.

You do not have to live in a museum. Set a showing routine that respects your household, and ask how feedback will be shared.



A realistic preparation calendar

Use these phases in order, whether you have three months or three weeks. The timing changes; the decisions do not.

01 DECIDE AND ASSESS

Clarify next-home needs, get an initial view of sale value, explore the buying market and choose a realistic timeline.

02 SORT AND SCOPE

Finish small zones, gather records, get estimates for significant issues and agree on a repair budget.

03 COMPLETE AND PRESENT

Finish chosen work, clean, simplify rooms, prepare the yard, photograph the home and confirm the listing plan.

04 SHOW AND MOVE

Use a sustainable showing routine, review feedback with context, manage offer decisions and coordinate closing.

Your first three actions: write down your reasons; finish one low-emotion zone; get advice before major repairs or a listing date.

A little room to make a plan

Start small. Write a decision or a first action in each space. You can fill in the rest when you have more information.

WHAT I WANT MY NEXT HOME TO DO FOR ME

ONE AREA I CAN SORT THIS WEEK

REPAIRS OR CONCERNS I WANT EVALUATED

THE PEOPLE I MAY WANT ON MY TEAM

MY PREFERRED TIMELINE AND SHOWING BOUNDARIES

Ditch the Chaos,

EMBRACE THE CALM.



Ready to prepare your home for its next chapter?

I can walk through the house with you and identify the work that matters to buyers. We can bring in people to handle the jobs that feel overwhelming. You will know what to do, what to skip and why - before you commit to a listing date.

Let’s have a conversation.

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