

'Tis the Season for Home Makeover

By Nan Hayes for Caring Transitions

This is the time of year many of us begin focusing on the inside of our homes, rather than the outside. As the weather cools, the condition or layout of your home may be capturing more of your attention. This may be especially true if you are planning to entertain friends and family over the holidays or thinking about placing your home on the market in the spring. Even if you are just spending more time indoors to avoid the cold and snow, it's a great time to evaluate your environment.

Walk Through

Most people associate the term "walk through" with a pending home sale, but it actually is a good process for all of us to go through every now and then.

This kind of walk-through is meant to be a personal and low-stress approach to your environment. The walk-through can be as detailed or superficial as you like and completed on your own timetable. There are no rules, so you can't "mess it up" and there is no reason not to try it at least once.

With a paper, pen or iPad in hand, simply walk through the house, first stopping at each doorway, then entering each room and taking a look from all angles. Write down what you like and don't like about each room. Consider if each room needs decluttering, downsizing, redecorating or remodeling. If you are thinking about listing your home in the spring, consider what each room might look like to a complete stranger. Is there too much furniture in the room? Is it too dark? Too cluttered? Too plain?

Create a room-by-room project "wish list" by writing down the minimum change you'd like to accomplish in each room and also optimal remodel projects or decorating concepts. If you plan to age in your home, consider adding safety features such as low door thresholds, rocker light switches, supportive chair rails, better lighting and no-slip flooring. If you plan to have small children in the home, look for sharp corners, exposed sockets, small objects on tables and unstable heavy furnishings. The list you end up with may be quite lengthy, but don't be intimidated. This is simply an exercise and you don't have to do all or even, any, of the things on the list.

Review your entire list and choose a room and project that feels most important to you. Consider if the time is right to get started and draw up a budget and time table for completing the project. Look for the necessary professional resources, such as the downsizing, decluttering and [liquidation](#) specialists from [Caring Transitions](#), as well as designers, architects and contractors. Finally, before you begin, take time to understand how the undertaking may affect the selling price of your home.

Cost Benefits of Basic Remodels

The size of your project can often determine your funding needs. Smaller projects may be financed through savings or cash while larger projects may require outside financing. Either way, if you are considering selling in the near future, it is important to understand whether or not the remodel investment will produce a return. Realtor Magazine publishes an [annual report](#) that reflects the cost-benefit ratios for various types of renovations across the country.

According to the 2013 report, a deck addition will provide an average return of 77.3%, while a major kitchen remodel or bath remodel typically provide less than a 60% return. Yet, the lower return doesn't mean the remodel is unnecessary or should be taken off the list. It is a good idea to consult a local realtor to understand what home buyers are looking for in your area.

Benefits of Downsizing and De-cluttering

One of the least expensive and often easiest ways to improve your living space is to spend some time on de-cluttering and organization. Studies have shown that reducing clutter will not only reduce stress, but improve home safety and help save time through improved organization. An added benefit to downsizing projects is they often pay for themselves!

For individuals who are looking to sell, de-cluttering is a first step in preparing a home for sale. If you are not sure where to start, professional services from Caring Transitions can help you with everything from space planning, sorting, organizing and downsizing to liquidating your personal items through donation, Estate sale or [Online Auction](#). Once you are ready to move, the very same professional team can help with packing and then unpacking the new residence.

The need to downsizing before moving to a smaller space is obvious, but if you are considering a move to a larger home, think about the following before you increase your monthly rent or mortgage: *How much of your house payments goes toward storage space instead of your living space?* Are you upsizing just to make room for more stuff? This is an easy exercise. Just compare your total square footage to the total amount of square footage you use to store the things you rarely or never use (spare bedroom, closets, garage, basement, attic, shed, shelving, closets, etc). You might be shocked at the result. Consider that by simply “clearing out the clutter” you may find you already have all the living space you need!

We understand that any downsizing or de-cluttering project can be overwhelming. As the nation’s largest professional resource for downsizing, de-cluttering and household liquidation, your Caring Transitions office provides a total solution for sorting, organizing, donations, shipments, packing, Estate Sale and Online Auction.

Visit us online at www.CaringTransitions.com.

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