
MYHOME CHECK

The paint colours that help boost a home's value

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If you're planning to list a home on the market, one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways that can help to increase its value is also one of the simplest: paint.

"It's the least expensive investment for the biggest return," says Jennie Norris, chairwoman of the International Association of Home Staging Professionals and her own Denver-based home staging business, Sensational Homes.

Painting the interior results in a 107 percent on the return on investment (ROI), and painting the exterior leads to a 55 percent ROI, according to a HomeGain Top DIY Home Improvements for Seller survey. Painting the exterior and interior costs but offers an increase in value..

About 68 percent of realtors recommend painting walls and 62 percent recommend paint touch-ups, according to a 2017 survey from the National Association of Realtors.

"Paint is the simplest, most effective, and most transformative way to change a space. The right kind of paint can make a small room look bigger."

Christina Hoffmann
Concept Manager
HouseLogic.com

Interior paint – select warm neutral colours

A home is more likely to sell with a fresh coat of paint, which is the very first thing buyers see.

“You want to have nice, fresh impression for the buyers,” says Norris. “They don’t want to come into a house that looks like it’s been worn hard and is in poor condition.”

Neutral colours make it easier for potential buyers to imagine themselves living there because the paint goes with just about anything. Many buyers also don’t want to shell out extra cash to paint after closing.

The three experts we spoke with all recommended warm neutral colours. Norris suggests using beiges, tans, golds, grays and “greige”—a blend of gray and beige. Avoid white, which is too stark.

Know which rooms to prioritize

“Paint is the simplest, most effective, and most transformative way to change a space,” says Christina Hoffmann, concept manager of HouseLogic.com, a homeownership and buying resource produced by the National Association of Realtors. “The right kind of paint can make a small room look bigger and a cavernous room look smaller,” she adds.

Small rooms can appear larger if you paint them with a lighter or pastel colour, says Hoffman. If you paint the trim and the walls the same colour, you’re creating an illusion of larger space. If you have a large room that you’d like to appear smaller, try using a warmer or darker colour to give the space a cozier feel. Lighter, neutral colours tend to photograph better since they make the room feel brighter.

Hoffman advises prioritizing the kitchen, bathrooms, entryways and foyer. Observing how natural and artificial light plays on the colour can help narrow down which to use.

Colour can also emphasize unique features. A bright white baseboard can pop against a different coloured wall. A more colourful nook could create a memorable impression on buyers. Hoffman says those tiny, charming details can make a good impression on potential buyers.

Paint types matter, too

Paint holds more than just colour. Different finishes and sheens can impact how the paint colour pops, how easy a wall is to clean, and other factors.

Fallyn Flaherty-Earp, a marketing manager for the Paint Quality Institute, recommends the following when it comes to choosing specific types of paint:

Stick to flat or eggshell sheens on broad walls, as they will not show off the nail pops and unevenness in walls as much as a satin will.

Satins and semi-gloss coats are better for durability and stain resistance.

Use semi-glosses on the trim and doors to make it easier to clean dust and handprints.

Price can be a good indicator of quality level. Spend a few extra dollars on a high-quality paint, or at least something mid-tier. With a cheaper paint, you might have to use more coats, and it won’t go on as smooth.

If you’re painting yourself, purchase high-quality brushes and rollers for an even, flawless finish.

Use eggshell or semi-gloss in the bathrooms where there might be moisture, advises Norris. And don’t forget to paint the trim and ceiling, not just the walls.

Exterior paint – no more than three colours

The exterior of your home is the first thing potential buyers see. Some homes, like those made of brick, won’t require fresh paint. But exteriors like stucco or siding might.

There should be no more than three colours on the exterior of the house, says Norris. She recommends following the 60-30-10 percentage rule: 60 percent is the body of the home, like stucco or brick, 30 percent is the garage doors and trim. The final 10 percent is the front and shutters, with just a pop of colour.

Norris says that you don’t want to use too many colours on the exterior. A variety of colours can be distracting and make the house appear choppy or smaller—distracting the buyer’s eye. One of her favorite colour schemes is a neutral gray for the body, white for the trim and garages and a front door with a pop of colour featuring brown or blue.

When do you need to paint your home’s exterior? When the exterior paint is peeling, chipped or cracked.

“A fresh coat of paint in on-trend colours for a house is always going to look better than a dated colour scheme with paint that is peeling, faded and worn,” says Norris. She advises picking neutral colours that will be current in the next five to 10 years. The exceptions are Victorian houses, historic properties and homes in tropical areas where brighter colours are the norm.

A full exterior paint job is best left to the pros, since many homeowners lack the necessary equipment, like ladders, scaffolding, and spray tools.

“Homeowners can definitely freshen up their trim around windows or repaint a garage, or front door, but the body of the house should be done professionally if it was painted before,” says Norris.

Most of the major paint companies create specific paints designed for home exteriors. Those exterior lines typically exclude colours that are less likely to hold up due to weather.

If you’re aiming at increasing the value of your home, a few cans paint can be a wise investment. Choosing the paint colours will not only appeal to the broadest audience possible, but also help future buyers envision themselves living in the space.

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