



HOME IMPROVEMENTS


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REALTY

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About Christine Rivlin



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Serving the greater San Francisco East Bay Area and specializing in Walnut Creek, Concord, Martinez, Danville, El Sobrante, Lafayette, and the surrounding East Bay communities.

When I was seven years old, I lived in Southern California, across the street from a girl who owned a pony. As any seven-year-old girl would probably tell you, all I wanted to do was ride that pony. I would ask the neighbor girl every time I saw her, and one day, she finally agreed on one condition: that I first jump out of her second-story window and into the big pile of sand below- ten times. It was a daunting task, but I was committed to my dream. Unfortunately (or perhaps not, depending on your perspective), my mother returned home after I'd made a few jumps and discovered what I was doing. I never did get to ride that pony. But my commitment to the idea remained, and my parents bought me a horse of my own when we moved to Woodside a few years later. I got bucked off daily, and at one point, tossed into a water trough! But I kept getting back on. Looking back, I'm not even sure what made me stick with it- I just loved that horse!

The story above describes how in all aspects of my life, I strive for excellence, and I'm always looking for ways to grow. Before coming to the real estate field, I competed dressage show horses for 24 years at the national and international levels. I owned and operated my own training business with six employees. I hold a BA in psychology and a Master's degree in clinical counseling, addictions, and industrial/organizational psychology. I am currently working on a Ph.D. in clinical psychology. In my spare time, I shoot competitively in USPSA and Multi gun, I am an avid hiker, I am a partner in a 501c3 horse rescue, am very involved in dog rescue and currently have five dogs, and I work part-time for two organizations that work with trauma and addictions clients.

I am a New York native but have called the San Francisco Bay Area home for over 30 years. I am extremely familiar with all of the specific nuances of the areas around San Francisco. I work with all clients from first time home buyers to specialty equestrian properties. When it comes to real estate agents, you have many to choose from, but I would love nothing more than to lend my knowledge and experience toward helping you with your real estate endeavors. I am incredibly organized and responsive, and I like to win, which means I will negotiate the best deal possible for you!!

Simple, Smart, & Sold

Home Improvements that can help you sell your home should be fairly simple, smart, and affordable. Most buyers look for move-in-ready, or at least minimal improvements with lower cost values. Remodeled kitchens and baths can go a long way, but here we are talking mostly about the cosmetic improvements that show your home in its best light when trying to sell, to help you get top dollar for your home.



START HERE

1. Clean your home inside and out
2. Replace or paint your front door
3. Clean up your landscaping, apply new bark, and add color
4. Power wash your exterior and clean gutters
5. Finish all little projects around the house, like tightening cabinet hinges.
6. Test and replace any sprinklers that are not functional.
7. Declutter the garage and yard, as well as inside.

NOW LET'S MOVE ON TO THE GOOD STUFF...



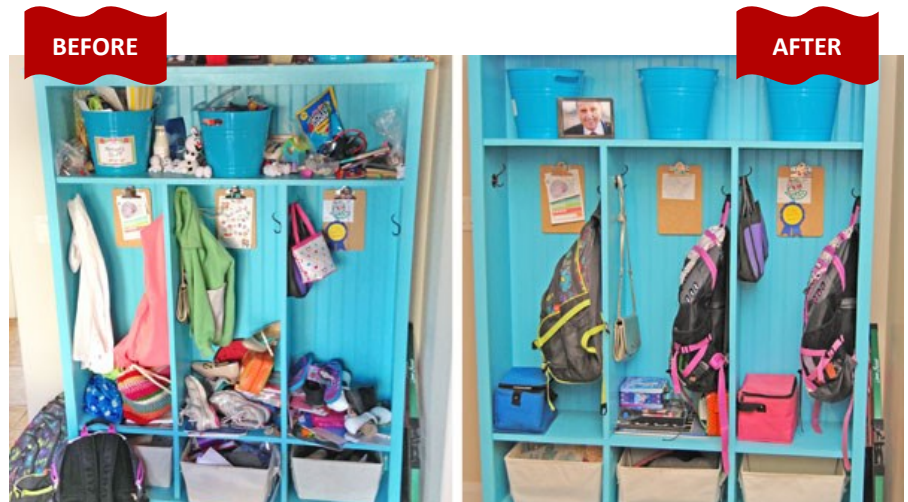
You will find a few quick, simple improvement ideas that may cost a little but get a big bang for the buck. Check out our **FREE** eBook on [Staging Your Home to Sell](#) for great ideas on decluttering.

6 Simple Improvements

#1 Declutter Every Room

There is a difference between clutter and just plain messy. So, assuming you cleaned up any messes in each room of your home, now step back and look at the problem areas where clutter can accumulate.

- ✓ Kitchen
- ✓ Bathrooms
- ✓ Bedrooms
- ✓ Entry Way
- ✓ Laundry Room
- ✓ Garage
- ✓ Closets
- ✓ Countertops
- ✓ Curio cabinets
- ✓ Wall décor and shelving
- ✓ Bookshelves
- ✓ Collections



Decluttering is important because you want to make your home to show to potential buyers that it is roomy, has plenty of storage, and there's a place for everything.

Think minimal. Use pops of color. Keep it clean and tidy.



6 Simple Improvements

#2 Paint with a Neutral Palette

A fresh coat of paint goes a very long way, especially neutral colors so that any buyer can picture their furniture and décor looking great in the space.

Before painting, make sure to spackle over any defects and wipe down to get the grime off.

When you are selecting colors, with the intent to sell your home, try to pick colors that can go with just about any décor. The most popular neutrals are a range of beiges and soothing grays tones, but a mix of the two can be more versatile.

Taupe is a transitional color, because its beige with black in it, taking it into the middle of the neutral paint choices. Browns and grays go well with taupe. Whatever you decide to



use, remember you are staging your house to get top dollar at purchase. Painting the entire home one color can give it a cohesive look rather than each room having a different palette.

Don't forget about your trim. At a minimum, clean and dust all of the window trim and moldings. Touch up if needed, but if they need freshening up, consider repainting them as well.

Above all else, a buyer needs to be able to have a clear vision of him or herself in the space, and the wall color has a lot to do with the clarity of that vision.



6 Simple Improvements

#3 Style Kitchen and Bathrooms

The two rooms potential buyers will remember are the kitchen and bathrooms when they view homes. You want yours to be remembered for the right reasons and stand out from the rest. Give these rooms a little extra humph even if remodeling isn't in the budget.

In the kitchen, you might consider a new backsplash, updated faucets, and contemporary light fixtures. Once you have it looking in the best light, get into the details. When a kitchen is decluttered, it should give the buyer a sense of a spacious prep space for the home cook. Add a few pops of color like a fruit bowl, fresh cut flowers, a colorful teapot on the burner, and a couple of modern touches that make it look functional,



but clean. Buy new kitchen towels, or replace your paper towel holder. There are a lot of ways to make it look like a great space to cook meals, that are inexpensive and quick.

The bathrooms need the same TLC as the kitchen. Replace guest towels, candles, anything that looks tired, dirty or outdated. Consider modern fixtures in this room as well. Remember, any updating that you do, limits the amount of work a new homeowner will have to tackle.

A bathroom should be an oasis, creating a spa-like feeling that a new homeowner will remember.



6 Simple Improvements

#4 Update Window Treatments

Heavy, layered draperies, and swags make a room seem dark, old and tired. Remove them! If you have any torn window shades, or bent mini-blinds replace them as well. Light sheers that just frame the window not only let in the light, but will give a more spacious feeling for the potential buyers. If the location of the window demands more privacy, then add new shades.

Window coverings are an area where you can let your personal palette come alive. Play with color to brighten the room, or go neutral with texture and design to give the room more dimension and that decorator touch. Window coverings that go from the ceiling to the floor can give an allusion of a taller ceiling height. Also you can make the window seem wider by adding width to the rod and adding complementary drapes.

Make sure to put that extra care into the windows in the kitchen and bathrooms as well. It's all in the details! This simple, weekend fix will brighten every room in your home, and give it a cleaner, fresher look.



Although you have a neutral palette in your paint, trim and décor, give the room pops of color with pillows, drapes, and furniture that you can take with you when you sell.



6 Simple Improvements

#5 Install Closet Systems

Another simple home improvement that doesn't cost thousands of dollars and can make your home more desirable to buyers are organized closet systems. What buyer doesn't dream of well organized closets, from the master to the guest rooms?

The big box home improvement stores all have affordable DIY closet organization solutions that are modular and you can do in a day. If you want to have systems installed, that is up to you, but this is a place where you can make a huge impact without a lot of money out of pocket.

Closets big or small should look organized and functional. Refill your closets with just enough of your stuff so the closet looks used but not cluttered. Store the rest for your move! Plus you will have some of your packing done too!



Create dream closets your buyers will love!



6 Simple Improvements

#6 Showcase Your Flooring

It's not always possible to replace flooring whether it's carpeting or hardwood. Make the best out of your budget and what you have. If you have the budget for engineered hardwood flooring, you will add value to your home, while making it more sellable. Flooring can be a big cost, but it can also turn buyers off in a split second. All they will see is dollar signs in their eyes.

If you have worn or dirty carpeting, get it cleaned or replace it. Don't hide stains with area rugs. If you have hardwood that could use a good sprucing up, then clean it good and touch up any damaged areas.

This is one home improvement that you may be able to recoup a high percentage of your investment as it can add value to your home. Talk to your Keller Williams Agent, and they should be able to advise you before you spend the money.



Flooring should be cohesive throughout. Hardwood or engineered wood is the most popular in the shared spaces, but carpeting in the bedrooms is still favored.



What is a Smart Home?



Smart Home Technology is on the Rise

How can Smart Home Technology help you sell your home? Of course, millennials and Gen Ys are the largest groups wanting a home with technology that keeps them secure and connected, but they aren't the only ones. Even Baby Boomers are looking for more convenience in their lives.

Connecting devices to your smart phone can save energy, money, and time. There are four categories of smart devices:

1. Utilities - Thermostat, light bulbs, sprinkler, electrical outlet, ceiling fan, stove, washer and dryer, powered window shades, etc.
2. Safety - Wireless key entry, doorbell, garage door, outdoor lighting, etc.
3. Security - Burglar alarm, smoke alarm, carbon monoxide detector, or any sensor that triggers a call for emergency assistance.
4. Audio / Visual - Personal assistant such as Alexa or Siri, TVs, music, etc.

With today's technology available to consumers, it can be pretty easy to get started. Setting your home up with Smart Home devices can be a great marketing tool, and make your home stand out, without too much out of pocket.

What do I Need?



You Will Need:



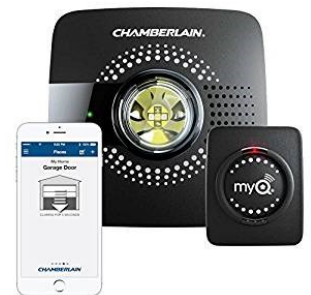
In order to market your home as a Smart Home when you list it for sale, you are required to have a minimum of 3 devices connected, WIFI, and the ability to control it away from the home. You should be able to do this under \$500 to meet the minimum requirement. One device MUST be a thermostat or security system. The other two devices can be anything else you choose.

A Smart Thermostat such as the Nest™ brand as pictured here will cost around \$225. A WIFI Doorbell is about \$60, smart outlets \$20, garage door opener starts at \$80, and so on.



SMART HOME TECH SETS YOUR HOME APART

- 80M smart home devices were delivered in 2016
- 45% of Americans expect to own or invest in smart home devices
- 54% of sellers are willing to invest if it will help sell their home
- 91% of users recommend it to others



Home Improvement ROI

Remodeling Isn't for Everyone

Updating a kitchen or bath with a full remodel isn't always the best return on investment. It can help you sell faster but you may not get 100% of your money back. That is the risk.

Here's a list of projects that may help you decide where to put your time and money when getting ready to put your home on the market.

Return on Investment

Project	Long-Term ROI
New Roof	109.0%
Hardwood Floors	100.0%
Entry door replacement (steel)	98.0%
New garage door	87.0%
Siding replacement (fiber-cement)	83.9%
Minor kitchen remodel (midrange)	81.8%
Window replacement (vinyl - mid-	78.6%
Bathroom remodel (midrange)	77.1%

Your Keller Williams Real Estate Agent will be a great resource for you and will advise you on how to prepare and stage your home for showings. Sometimes it takes more than just a little decluttering to get top dollar for your home, and we all want the most we can get out of our investment.