

**CREATE NEW SPACES.**

Adding a reading corner in this master bedroom (left) shows that the space can accommodate more than bedroom furniture.

**USE THE REFLECTION.**

A mirror can show off extra features that otherwise wouldn't fit in the camera shot.

## 8 Camera Tips to Capture a Room's Size

Buyers love spacious homes. They also love to look at online property photos. But it's not always easy to squeeze square footage into a camera shot—and sometimes furniture arrangements or floor coverings actually do a disservice to the way your listing is presented online or in marketing photos, says Debra Gould, president of home staging company Six Elements Inc. in Toronto and creator of the Staging Diva training program. She offers these tips for making sure that every room of your listing looks as large in photos as it does in real life.

**1. Remove area rugs.** Rugs break up the expanse of the floor and can make rooms look smaller. Keep the floor as clear as possible.

**2. Use a wide-angle camera.** A camera with a wide-angle lens (28 millimeters or less on a DSLR, or the equivalent on a point-and-shoot) is best for interior shots because it magnifies the distance between objects and showcases a room's depth, Gould says. But beware of fisheye

lenses or ultra wide-angle lenses, which tend to make rooms look wider but can mislead buyers into thinking there's more space than there is.

**3. Get creative with furniture.** Make sure that furniture doesn't block views or walkways so you reveal as much of the floor as possible. If there's too much furniture packed into a room or the furniture is too large, it can also work against you in photos. In a crowded room, try removing a few pieces of furniture or swapping in a smaller piece. In a kitchen or dining room, it might look better if you remove that extra leaf from the table. Try using furniture to create new spaces in large rooms and really show off that square footage. For example, Gould added a reading corner in a master bedroom to show that more than just a bed could fit (see photo above).

**4. Fill up an empty space.** Buyers have trouble imagining how their stuff will fit into an empty room; the space can seem smaller than it really is. If possible,

bring in furniture for staging. "If the rooms are furnished, they look larger and much more inviting," Gould says.

**5. Use mirrors to your advantage.** A reflection in a mirror can reveal more of a room when you can't squeeze everything into your photo. This can be a great technique particularly when photographing bathrooms. Use the reflection of the bathroom mirror to show the extras, such as that soaker tub (see photo above, right). Just be sure to shoot photos at an angle so that you don't capture your own reflection!

**6. Lighten up.** In photos, brighter rooms typically come across as more open and welcoming, whereas dark rooms can look small and dingy. Pay attention to the light sources in a room to get a better shot. Turn on all of the lights and open the curtains to let in natural light and expand the space. But don't shoot directly into a light source; it'll darken a room.

**7. Shoot at an angle.** The diagonal line is the longest

visual line in a room. Try shooting from the corner; back up as far as you can before you shoot. But don't limit yourself: Take shots from three or four different angles so that you have plenty of options, Gould recommends. Also, try getting low to the ground to show off the length of the room. Eye level doesn't always work best to capture floor proportions.

**8. Remove clutter.** You've heard it before, but clutter makes a room look cramped and steals attention from a room's intended focal points. Clear away paper stacks, crowded walls of artwork, cluttered countertops, magnets covering the refrigerator, and towels hanging from the stove.

Finally, do your best to ensure that any major changes you make to a room's layout for the purpose of photos are kept in place for showings. "You'll create a disconnect if the house looks great only in the online photos," Gould says. "If buyers feel let down, they're not going to buy the house." *By Melissa Dittmann Tracey* ■

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