

Tips for Better Photography

Get the Right Camera:

For real estate, select a camera with a wide-angle lens so you can capture an entire room, or an entire home, in one shot. Wide angle means a lens "equivalent to a 28mm lens" on a 35mm camera, or lower. You'll also want at least a 4X optical zoom (rather than a digital zoom) to highlight specific features of the home. Fortunately, there's now a good selection of wide-angle/zoom cameras in all categories, from compacts to digital SLRs.

Learn a Camera's Features:

Today, all digital cameras boast automatic features and presets that help ensure a good picture, whatever the subject and setting. But you need to understand why and when to use each and switch them on.

Think Before You Shoot:

Don't just snap away as you walk through the house. Scout each room, and think in terms of how to capture its appeal. That may mean removing clutter, clearing tables and shelves, or rearranging furniture to better convey the possibilities in that space.

Compose Your Shot:

Use the camera's viewfinder or monitor to visually compose your picture before shooting. See how the image changes when you move closer or away from your subject, or when viewed from different angles.

Use a Tripod or Monopod:

When shooting in any poorly lit setting or using zoom, there's always the risk of the picture blurring if you hold the camera. With the camera mounted and stationary, the potential problem is easily eliminated.

Step-Up:

Use a stool or step ladder to take a picture from a slightly higher perspective than eye level. Otherwise, your pictures can highlight too much ceiling, rather than what's on floor level.

Turn Up the Lights:

For interior shots, turn on all the available lights, even when using flash. If your camera's built-in flash range is too limited, invest in portable lights or an auxiliary flash (if available for your camera). Or, plan to shoot during daytime hours, and take advantage of ambient light.

Avoid Backlit Situations:

When the background is bright, the subject can get lost in the shadows. Inside, you can avoid this by drawing the curtains; outside, by tightly framing your subject. Some cameras have specific settings for shooting against a bright background.

Shoot Like a Pro:

Take lots of pictures—professional photographers fire away because they know the more they shoot, they more likely they will get that perfect shot. Zoom in and out, shoot interiors with and without flash, move around, and take several pictures of the listing in every room.

Get It Right Before You Leave:

Use your camera monitor, netbook, or notebook to review your photos while you're still on site. It's better to make sure you have all the pictures you need than discover later you have to return for that one shot you missed.

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