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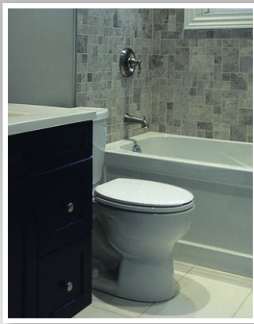
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HOME, LAWN & GARDEN

Maintain your home to retain value

It takes a lot of effort to keep a home clean and in working order inside and out, but it pays off, according to Ray Ferris, president of the Ontario Real Estate Association.

"By taking care of your home you will preserve the value and quality of your investment," says Ferris. "It also makes a difference to a neighbourhood when everyone takes care of their property."

In a recent survey by OREA, seven out of 10 home sellers in Ontario said that 'cleanliness' is very important to retaining a home's future resale value. In comparison, half said that a new/renovated kitchen is very important, while 46 per cent said the same for a renovated bathroom.

"If a potential buyer is willing to install a new kitchen or bathroom, but can't envision the new room on account of an ill-kept home, they may decide to look elsewhere," says Ferris. "With regular maintenance and upkeep, home owners stand to attract the right kind of attention from potential buyers."

Here are just a few simple tips for keeping your home in tip-top shape:

Curb appeal: A home's exterior sets the

tone for what the inside might look like. Convince buyers your home is worth exploring by keeping the walls and windows clean, the lawn healthy and mowed and the trees trimmed.

Repairs: Set aside some savings for those unexpected big repairs, such as roof, plumbing and electrical problems. By keeping up with minor fixes – weatherproofing, cleaning gutters, replacing broken roof tiles or shingles – you can prevent major problems later on.

Upgrades: If a new kitchen or bathroom is not in the cards, consider other upgrades like new water fixtures or energy-saving appliances to boost the value of your home.

"A Realtor understands what gives a home its value, and can explain to a home buyer what they should be looking for," says Ferris. "When the time comes to sell, these same criteria will have a big impact on the selling price."

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