

# your home

*Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers*

## 5 red flags FOR OPEN HOUSE EVALUATIONS

➤ It's easy to get excited when you start looking for a home to purchase, but don't let that adrenaline rush cloud your judgment! Sellers who are eager to sell might not be totally forthcoming in revealing any existing issues with the home. Here are a few red flags you should be on the lookout for when attending an open house:



**1 Something smells.** While at first it may seem pleasant, prospective sellers may try and add overwhelmingly powerful scents to their home for the showing. This could be an attempt to mask a serious odor problem in the home.

**2 Amateur tiling.** When looking at all the floor and kitchen tiling, you need to notice the details. If there are spaces or grouting issues, that's a sign that the homeowners have done the tiling themselves, which may lead to an expensive future project for you.

**3 Cracks in the foundation.** Of course, every home has its share of small cracks. But it's important to observe whether the base of your prospective new home has serious foundational issues. Check to see if doors or windows stick when opening and closing them, signifying a shifting foundation. Also, look for large, noticeable cracks on walls, floors or ceilings.

**4 Freaky fungus.** Make sure to check out all pipes and drains in the home to see if there is any mold present. Take it a step further and check to see if there are any faults or leaks, which may lead to fungus growth later on.

**5 Cosmetic enhancements.** If any changes to the home seem extremely recent or out of place, that could be a sign that the owners are trying to hide something. Fresh new paint or plaster on the walls could be a sign of mold growth. A brand-new rug on the floor can mean there's a stain or flooring issue that's being hidden.

## PROS AND CONS OF VIRTUAL STAGING



Trying to sell a home can often be difficult. Everyone likes something different. The question then becomes, how do you present your home so that a wide variety of potential buyers become interested? Enter the practice of staging a home. This is when you furnish your home to show off its most attractive qualities and properties, making it more appealing to buyers.

Taking the art of staging a step further is the practice of virtual staging. With no actual furniture involved, this is a digital rendering of what a potential home could look like when furnished. Here are some of the benefits and drawbacks with virtual staging:

### Pros:

- ➔ If your home is empty, it's easier to showcase its best features
- ➔ Considerably cheaper than traditional staging
- ➔ Grabs the attention of buyers who primarily view properties online
- ➔ Allows the variation of styling for flex rooms, or rooms that can be used for different purposes

### Cons:

- ➔ If you need to remove items or furniture from photos, this could raise the cost
- ➔ Buyers can't see the room as designed in person, sometimes deterring a purchase
- ➔ Often difficult to configure if the house is occupied, unless you have previous listing photos



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WWW.DIANETHOMPSON.COM  
diane@dynamiterealtor.com

512-657-5228 M  
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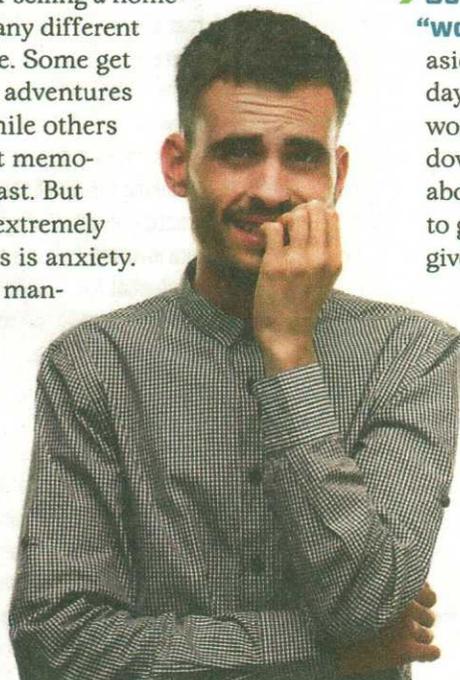


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# DON'T SWEAT **the sale**

↘ The process of selling a home can induce many different emotions in people. Some get excited about new adventures on the horizon, while others get nostalgic about memories made in the past. But one feeling that is extremely common for sellers is anxiety. How can you help manage these stresses in order to make your home selling experience more pleasant? Here are some tips to help you relax:



➔ **Schedule a designated “worry time”**—Try setting aside a brief window in your day where you allow yourself to worry. During that time, write down all of your fears or issues about the selling process and try to generate solutions. This will give you a better sense of control over the situation.

➔ **Use a “time out”**—If your anxiety is interfering with the rest of your normal routine on a daily basis, try a more definitive approach to destressing. Working out, doing yoga or even meditation can help your anxieties drift away.

➔ **Nighttime no-no**—Avoid talking about or discussing your home selling plans at night. Stressing over the sale late in the evening could end up costing you sleep, which you’ll need so you can make informed and rational business decisions.

➔ **Consult the informed**—Many people fall into the trap of asking the opinion or taking the advice of an untrained or uninformed source. Don’t do it! This only furthers the stress. Stick to the sound advice of your real estate professional for the sale of your property.

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