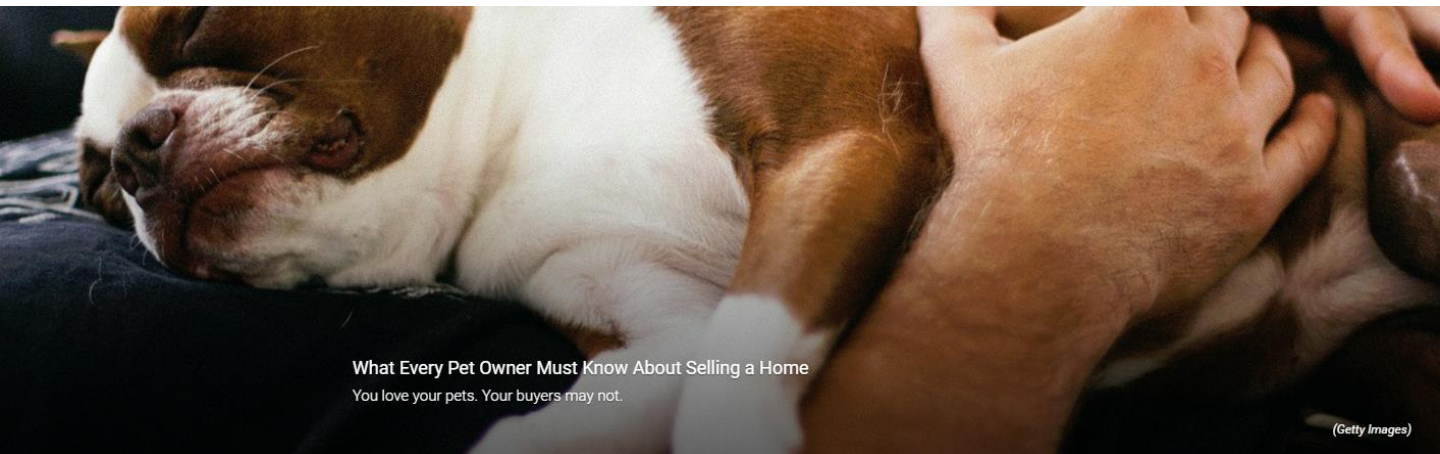


What Every Pet Owner Must Know About Selling a Home

By: Geoff Williams

You love your pets. Your buyers may not.



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(Getty Images)

Your family members are stinking up the place.

Sorry to tell you that, but if you're selling your home, you would hear it eventually. You may already be acutely aware. If you have a dog or cat, and especially if you have multiple pets, it doesn't matter that they're part of the family. If the moment buyers walk into your house they smell cat urine wafting from the litter box, or they see clumps of dog fur on the carpet and furniture, odds are, you've just lost a sale.

What can you do if you can't move out first and clean up the damage in order to sell? You're in for an experience.

Tori Toth is a home stager and the author of "Feel at Home: Home Staging Secrets For a Quick and Easy Sell," as well as a U.S. News contributor. Toth, who has two dogs, two cats and a bird, has a few suggestions on some pet cleaning products you may want to get, which may help you with some of your cleaning issues. Do your shopping homework first, if you plan to buy any of these, but Toth is not a paid endorser for any of these products.

•*Mind the litter box.* Toth suggests considering an automatic litter box, since humans are forgetful, and you can't afford to forget about scooping cat litter when you're showing your home.

•*Find something to kill the smells.* Toth vouches for a product called Fresh Wave Odor Neutralizing Super Gel. Just open the lid, and the oils inside, Toth says, will neutralize unwanted odors.

•*Vacuum daily.* Toth recommends the Dyson DC25 Animal Vacuum. She calls it "amazing" and says to make sure you vacuum the furniture, "since you never know when a buyer may stop by."

•*Brush your pets.* Toth likes The FURminator product line. "It removes your pet's undercoat and can reduce shedding by 90 percent," she says.

•*Keep your pets' nails trimmed.* "Like pet hair, you want to maintain their nails to avoid scratches on your hardwood floor, carpet or furniture," Toth says.

If you can get your pets out during showings, all the better. If you have a lot of showings within a few days, maybe you could kennel your pets or send them over to a friend or family's house.