



# extra spaces

Entries, Halls, Stairways  
& Laundry Rooms

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## Day Eight – Extra Spaces - Entries, Halls, Stairways and Laundry Rooms

### Overview

I'll be giving you a break from the typical 20+page room modules by trying to keep this module about transitional spaces and laundry rooms short and to the point. I'll talk more at length about the entryway or "first impression," while mainly using photo examples of hallways, stairs and laundry rooms to fuel your imagination.

Unlike the other room modules, I'll be addressing both redesign and staging within the same text, since these areas are fairly simple to decorate. Refer back to the *Art of Arranging* for ideas on personalizing these spaces using photos for redesign.

### The Entryway

The entryway is the natural "introduction" to your home for both staging and redesign. It gives buyers or visitors an instant "impression" about you and your home that they will unconsciously be reinforcing throughout the rest of the home. Much like an introduction to a book, your home's entry tells the visitor what to expect from the other chapters or rooms.

We automatically do this first impression instant assessment of other *people* when we meet someone new, so it makes sense that we would also do it in a home. Buyers are especially guilty of making that 10-second first impression assessment, so it's always a critical aspect of staging to capitalize on those first 10 seconds!

The entry and front hall is a transitional space from the outdoors to the inside. In redesign, the entry should represent a welcoming space where you are received by your home and its presence. What does that presence look like? It should be a place of comfort, invitation, functionality and transition. The space should represent a respite from the outside world.



**Note:** Think light, bright, open and warm. If the area is small, use as little furniture as possible when staging. Most buyers come in groups and you don't want that first impression to be one of tightness and congestion.

### Functionality in the Foyer for Redesign

What is the first thing you do when you enter your home? Probably, like most of us, you immediately lay down your belongings and take off your shoes. For redesign, look to provide places to sit and to store shoes, backpacks, purses and keys for your clients. If they never use the front entryway because they walk in through a garage, look to provide functionality in that location instead. Be sure to ask your clients about their needs for the entryway.

## For Staging

For staging, functionality is not so important as beauty and invitation. Remember, we don't want to cramp a group of buyers when they walk into the home, so if the area is narrow and small, consider simply using a mirror on the wall. If you have the space and width, consider an entry table with a mirror over it and a large potted plant next to it.



**Note:** Providing life in the form of a large, green potted plant in the entry is a good way to transition the visitor from the outside to the inside of the home.

If you have no entry, it's easy to create one through the arrangement of furniture. Use a narrow table to place against the adjoining wall as your entry table and consider using the back of the couch to create a walkway.

Be extra critical of the entry and be sure to take a photo from the viewpoint a buyer has when he or she is walking in. Is the view clean, light, open and inviting? If there are negative elements, what can you do to distract from them? I once was staging a home that had linoleum for the flooring in the entry. During the staging day, I took the brightest piece of artwork and placed it on the wall as you walked into the entry, so that the eyes were immediately drawn to the art and not the floor. Needless to say, I highly suggested new flooring be put into this very important area as well in the Action Plan.



**Important:** Imagine walking into a hotel lobby. What elements do you usually see? We want buyers to be wowed by this space, so that their first impression is a great one! If we can make that first impression great, then buyers will be looking to reinforce it throughout the rest of the walk through.



**Note:** Buyers will not feel comfortable taking their shoes off when entering a space, so ask that the sellers refrain from making this request if they normally do so in their home.

The following pages give you a visual reference on creating inviting entryways.

## Entryways that Wow



### **Transition:**

Plant life used as an accessory helps to transition visitors while a large round mirror visually expands the space.

### **Invitation:**

The shell helps to introduce the visitor to the coastal theme of the home while candles automatically provide warmth. Any narrow table will do, so be creative: pull a table from the bedroom or use a couch console table from the family room.

### **Transition:**

Grab an outdoor potted plant for an easy transition.

### **Invitation:**

No table available? No problem-- use a desk or sideboard, as in this picture. In this home where there was no formal entry, an entry was created next to the stairs using these few pieces.



## Entryways that Wow



The formula works, so search the home for a large piece as a focal point to create the entry, and accessorize simply using plants, vases for symmetry (above) and picture frames.

A bedside table was taken from the master bedroom (top right) to create the critical entry.



## Entry Before-and-After

I know at this point you must be thinking, “Audra, I wish I had those nice entryways to work with in my staging days!” Below is an example of one of the worst case scenarios and yes, cosmetic fixes are critical in this first impression space so make sure to suggest them to your clients!



The entry before was dark, narrow, dated and dingy, so cosmetic paint and recessed lighting became critical in this very old home before it could be sold. The dark paneling became a positive architectural feature once painted to match the moldings and door.

The window coverings were taken down in the adjoining room and bushes were trimmed outside in order to let the light in. An inexpensive table purchased at Target served to welcome buyers, and a gorgeous painting pulled from the bedroom finished the look. Now the entry ushered visitors into the light, bright living area rather than the dark cave that it was before.



**Tip:** In small, narrow entryways like the one above, it's best to use the same flooring in order to expand the space.

Prosource, in the Member Discount area is a terrific vendor for providing wholesale flooring to your clients.

## Entry Before-and-After

Here are some excellent examples from some of our members:



### BEFORE

Michelle Butler from Beautifully Staged had a big job ahead of her with this home whose entry opened up directly into the living area!

The paint color was too stylized and stuff was everywhere, so cosmetic work came first by painting and then removing clutter. Can you identify a few useful pieces as starting points for an entry in this photo?

### AFTER

You can see the space in it's entirety in this photo. A neutral paint color was used and a simple entry was created using the same pieces in the picture above. Can you recognize them? Yes, she pulled the chair away from the small table and placed it next to it with a simple throw in the after picture. She used the back of the couch to create a separate space for an entry.



## Entry Before-and-After



### BEFORE

Janet Borman of Montana Home Staging was faced with a bit of a challenge with this narrow yet separate entry.

### AFTER

By adding some simple accessories, Janet was able to create an entry that is both welcome and contemporary.





## The Hallway

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The hallways in any home should be clear, light and clean. Carefully examine the walls and baseboards, because this is an area where little fingerprints and scuff marks have a tendency to show.

Because hallways are by nature long and narrow, be sure there is nothing on the floors there so that buyers have a clear space to walk. Flooring is especially noticeable in hallways, so be sure it is clean and stain free, and remove any runners. Since hallways have a tendency to be dark, brighten them by switching out the bulbs and cleaning the fixtures.



**Note:** If the hallway is especially narrow, consider keeping the walls empty or at the very least place wall hangings only on one side. We don't want the wall hangings to crowd or close in the hallway. For long hallways that end at a blank wall, consider placing a mirror on the wall in order to open up the space visually.

Many times, hallway areas will have built-ins which can be staged. Below are some good visual examples of staged hallway built-ins:



## Stairways

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In any home, stairways, like hallways, should be clear, light and clean. Again, carefully examine the walls and baseboards because this is another area where little fingerprints and scuff marks have a tendency to show. People naturally look down while travelling staircases, so floors that are clean, repaired and stain-free are critical! If the stairway is the first thing one sees when entering a home, then create a vignette at its base, as shown in these pictures:

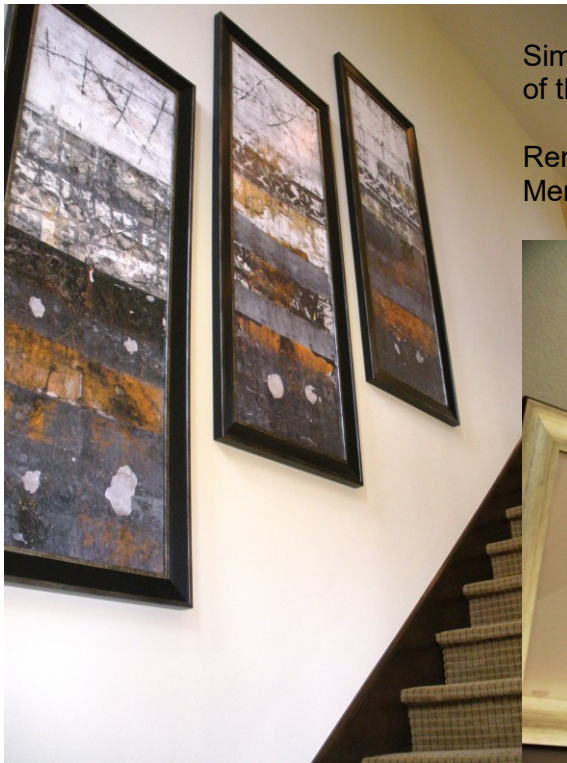


While the stairway is a wonderful area to display family photos, if you are staging the home, take the personal photos down and replace them with large prints.



**Note:** If the stairway is especially narrow, consider keeping the walls empty, or at the very least place wall hangings only on one side. We don't want the wall hangings to crowd or close in the stairway. For long stairways that end at a blank wall, consider placing a mirror on the wall in order to open up the space visually.

Below are some good visual examples of staged stairways with depersonalized wall hangings:



Simply stair step the artwork to match the movement of the stairs.

Remember to use simple dry wall hooks from the Member Discount Area to easily hang art by hand.



### Accentuate the Positive...

If the home is blessed with an architecturally rounded staircase, accentuate the lines and the feature by placing a round table at the base, as in the picture at right...



## The Laundry Room

Since not all homes even have the luxury of a laundry room, make sure to stage this obscure little room so buyers immediately notice this positive aspect of the home!



**Tip:** Who doesn't love the clean smell of fresh laundry? An easy way to give the laundry room the same fresh clean smell is to use *Bounce* dryer sheets in between folded towels like in the pictures below.

