FLOWERS TEAM STAGING SERIES

The Flowers Team Stage Day Prep Guide

How to Get Your Milton Home Ready for Stage Day, Photos, and Market

By Amy Flowers, Broker, Flowers Team Real Estate
Staging guidance from Tara Llewellyn, Certified Staging Professional

The Flowers Team at Royal LePage Meadowtowne Realty · Ranked #1 in Milton since 2009

A NOTE FROM AMY

> *"Stage day is the day your home becomes the version buyers fall in love with. Everything you do before it decides how good that day can be."*

We built our staging program in-house because we watched the same thing happen again and again: two similar homes in the same Milton subdivision, listed at the same time, and the staged one sold faster and for more. Today our staging is led by Tara Llewellyn, voted Milton's number one home stager in the Milton Readers' Choice Awards every year since 2017. Tara has staged more than 1,000 homes for our clients, from condos to estate homes.

Stage day itself is our job. Tara, her stagers, our movers, a professional cleaner, our photographer and our videographer all move through your home in a single day. What we need from you is the work that happens before we arrive: the decluttering, the pre-packing, the small repairs and the paint decisions on Tara's checklist. This guide walks you through every part of it, in the order it happens.

Keep it close from the day of your consultation to the day you walk back into your finished home. Most of our sellers tell us that moment is the one they remember most.

Amy Flowers

Broker, CEO and Team Leader | The Flowers Team at Royal LePage Meadowtowne Realty

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CHAPTER ONE

What Stage Day Is

Stage day is the single day your home is staged, cleaned, photographed and filmed, ready for its launch on MLS.

On every Flowers Team listing, staging and photography are planned together. We choose a stage day and tie it to your launch date, so the photos buyers see online are taken on the day your home looks its very best. The first showing is online. Most buyers decide whether to book a showing within seconds of seeing the first photo, and staging is what earns that click.

Who will be in your home

There can be upwards of a dozen people in the property on stage day, all working in sequence:

- Tara Llewellyn, directing the transformation room by room
- Our staging crew, styling every space
- Our movers, bringing pieces in from our Milton warehouse
- A professional cleaner, who comes through once the staging is complete
- Our photographer and videographer, who capture the finished home

How long it takes

The physical work of bringing in and setting up the staging takes upwards of five to six hours, depending on the size of the home, whether there is an elevator involved, and how much of the home is vacant. Sellers leave in the morning, and by the time they return at the end of the day, it is all done.

What it costs you

Most of our sellers choose our Gold Package. Staging is included with the Gold Package, absorbed as part of our fee and collected upon a successful sale, so there is no upfront cost for staging. The Gold Package covers the consultation, full staging, the professional clean, and photography and videography, all on the same day. For sellers who prefer to make the changes themselves, we also offer a staging consultation on its own.

> **The Flowers Team Rule**
>
> Stage before photos. Always. Listing photos are too important to your online performance to leave unstaged, so if photos are ever taken before a home is staged, we retake them.

CHAPTER TWO

Your Timeline to Stage Day

The staging takes one day. The preparation is where the time goes, and that part is yours.

1. **Your staging consultation**
   Tara walks through your home with you, room by room, the way a buyer would. A consultation takes about two hours for a standard-sized home and can be done in person or by video call. You leave with a written preparation checklist, clear guidance on which updates are worth it and which to skip, advice on paint and lighting, and Tara's staging plan for your home.

2. **Your preparation phase**
   You work through Tara's checklist: decluttering, pre-packing, painting and small repairs. We connect you with trusted trades whenever you need them, and we only recommend professionals we have personally worked with.

3. **Stage day and your launch**
   Once your home is ready, we book stage day and tie it to your launch on MLS. You are out for the day, and you come back to a finished home with photos and video that match what buyers will see in person.

How long it usually takes

YOUR SITUATION	CONSULTATION TO STAGE DAY
Home in excellent condition, very little on the checklist	About one to one and a half weeks
Most Milton sellers	A couple of weeks
Planning well ahead of your move	Prep done months early, then stage day about a week after your next purchase firms up. Very little happens in under a week, because several service providers are involved.
Urgent situations	We have gone from consultation to a finished stage in 24 hours when circumstances required it

> **Start Earlier Than You Think**
>
> Some of our clients have engaged Tara a year ahead of listing, and those sellers have the most room to make smart choices. The hardest timeline is the one that starts after you have already bought your next home: the pressure is high, the time is short, and decisions about paint and repairs get rushed.

CHAPTER THREE

Declutter and Pre-Pack

Decluttering is the most important and the most time-consuming job on your list. Tara calls it starting to pre-pack, and it puts you ahead of the game when moving day comes.

Clutter makes rooms feel smaller, and buyers read it as a sign that the home lacks storage. The goal is a home that feels lived in without feeling like it belongs to one specific family. Buyers need to be able to see their own life in the space.

Depersonalize first

The first conversation in almost every consultation is about family photographs on the walls. Take down family photos, personal collections and children's artwork, and pack anything that ties the home to your family. Once photos come down, Tara can bring in staging artwork so the walls still feel finished.

Edit every surface

Clear the tops of side tables, counters, dressers and bookcases down to almost nothing. Remove small decorative items. Tara replaces them with fewer, larger pieces that photograph well.

Thin out closets and cupboards

Buyers open everything. A packed closet or cupboard tells them the home does not have enough storage, which undermines one of its strengths. Pack out-of-season clothing, extra linens and anything you will not need while the home is listed.

Decide where it all goes

- Off-site storage is the cleanest option for anything that needs to leave the property
- The garage works only if it stays organized, not stuffed to the ceiling
- The basement works if it does not change how buyers see that space
- A trusted friend or family member's home is a good short-term option

> **The Garage Is Not a Storage Unit**
>
> If the garage is full, the cupboards are packed, and staging furniture is then brought in on top of that, you have not gained anything. The house still feels small, because it is quietly telling buyers there is not enough storage. Move it off-site instead.

CHAPTER FOUR

Paint, Repairs and Small Updates

Tara's checklist tells you exactly which updates will earn a return and which ones to skip. Follow it closely, and do not get ahead of it.

Paint: wait for Tara

There are dozens of shades of white, beige and neutral, and the wrong undertone can throw off the entire staged look. Tara's most recommended colours for Flowers Team listings are Benjamin Moore Swiss Coffee and Ballet White. The undertones she corrects most often are warm orange and red tones, which turn pink in listing photos. Bright, stark whites read cold and clinical. Aim for warm without yellow, and neutral without feeling sterile, with a consistent palette from room to room.

Builder-grade paint surprises many sellers. Even in a home that is only 20 years old, the original paint can look chalky and tired, because it was never designed to last. If painting is not your strength, hire a professional painter. The result is faster and cleaner.

Lighting

Dated light fixtures are the number one tell of a home's age. The half-moon frosted fixture over the dining table is a common one in Milton. Use soft white or warm white bulbs throughout, and avoid daylight-spectrum bulbs, which make rooms feel cool and distort colours in photos.

Hardware and finishes

Brass doorknobs are an instant age signal in established Milton subdivisions. New cabinet hardware, faucets and shower heads are affordable changes that make a home look more expensive than what was spent.

Repairs worth making

- Fix actual damage: gouged countertops, cracked tile, pulled or stained carpet, water damage
- Touch up baseboards and trim
- Address any visible maintenance issue that could signal neglect
- Skip major renovations unless Tara and your agent recommend them; they rarely pay for themselves in the sale price

> **Do Not Buy Paint Before Your Consultation**
>
> Painting the wrong shade of white after all that preparation is one of the hardest mistakes to recover from. Let Tara weigh in before you buy a single can.

CHAPTER FIVE

Your Room-by-Room Prep Checklist

Use this as your working list in the days before stage day. Tara's written checklist for your home always comes first; this covers what applies to almost every Milton home.

SPACE	BEFORE STAGE DAY
Front exterior and entry	Cut the grass, trim and edge gardens, remove dead plants. Clear stains and weeds from the driveway and walkway. Wipe down the front door. Make sure exterior lights work and are free of cobwebs. In winter, keep the driveway and walkway clear.
Kitchen	Clear countertops almost completely. Clean cupboards inside and out. Clear the front of the fridge. Put away dish racks, small appliances and cleaning supplies.
Living and family rooms	Remove family photos and personal collections. Edit side tables and bookcases down to a few pieces. Tidy cords and remotes out of sight.
Primary bedroom	Remove all personal items and photos. Clear nightstands and dressers. Clear the floor and the space under the bed.
Bathrooms	Nothing on the sink and nothing around the toilet. Remove garbage pails, toilet bowl cleaners and other utility items. Clean ceiling vents. Wipe walls and glass free of water marks and soap residue.
Home office	Remove papers, folders, cords and chargers. If the room has two uses, choose one to present.
Children's rooms and play areas	Condense toys to the basement or a playroom. Plan to remove baby gear and children's items for photos and video.
Closets and storage	Pack out-of-season items. Leave visible breathing room on shelves and rails.
Garage and basement	Organized, not stuffed. Move overflow off-site.

Deep clean every room

Our professional cleaner comes through after staging and before photos, but the base level of clean should already be in place. On our listings there is usually a window of a week or two between the consultation and stage day, and that is the time to deep clean.

Clear the air

The best scent in a staged home is no scent at all. Heavy air fresheners and plug-ins make buyers wonder what is being covered up. Owners become used to their own pets, so steam clean carpets, relocate litter boxes and keep up daily cleaning. A musty smell points to moisture, so deal with the source.

CHAPTER SIX

The Day Before and the Morning Of

The last 24 hours are about finishing the checklist and getting out of the way, so our crew can do its best work.

The day before

- Finish packing everything on Tara's checklist and move boxes off-site or into an organized garage
- Put daily-use items into baskets or drawers so counters and vanities are clear
- Secure jewellery, important documents, medications and other valuables
- Tell us about anything that must not be moved, such as heirlooms or fragile pieces
- Confirm access details and where our trucks can park
- If you have a fireplace, show us how it works; we like it running for photos when possible

The morning of

- Make the beds and do a final tidy, then leave the rest to us
- Plan your day away from home, with children and pets out of the house as well
- Leave the thermostat at a comfortable, consistent temperature
- Take what you need for the day, so you do not need to come back until we call

> **Why We Ask You to Be Out**
>
> With staging crew, movers, a cleaner, a photographer and a videographer all working through the home at once, stage day is busy. Being away lets the crew move quickly and protects the reveal. By the time you walk back in, it is all done.

If you are living somewhere else and the home is vacant, the process is the same. Tara photographs every room from corner to corner before stage day so she can plan each piece to the size and shape of the space.

CHAPTER SEVEN

What Happens on Stage Day

While you are out, your home moves through five steps in a single day.

1. **The furniture arrives**
   Our movers and staging crew bring pieces from our 3,500 square foot Milton warehouse, which holds well over $500,000 in furniture, rugs, art, lighting and accessories hand-selected by Tara. Well over 200 items go into every staged home.

2. **Tara styles every room**
   In an occupied home, Tara works with your existing pieces wherever the size and colour suit the room, edits out what does not, and brings in pieces that work with what stays. She layers in rugs, art, lamps, textiles and greenery, placing 20 to 25 lamps in a typical home.

3. **Everything is set for the camera**
   Every decision is made with the photographer's lens in mind. Tara stages for the wide corner shot, places the headboard so the window appears in the photo, and keeps windows and sliding doors in view.

4. **The professional clean**
   Once staging is complete, our professional cleaner comes through so every surface is ready for the camera.

5. **Photos and video**
   Our photographer and videographer capture the home exactly as Tara designed it, ready for your launch on MLS.

3,500	88+	20 to 25
Square foot staging warehouse	Area rugs in our inventory	Lamps in a typical staged home

What we bring, and what we leave alone

For a vacant home, we bring sofas, chairs, dining tables, beds, nightstands, area rugs, art, mirrors, lamps, curtains and accessories. We do not fill cupboards, stock dishes or pots and pans, or place anything under vanities. Those areas stay clean and clear, because buyers open them.

The reveal

When you walk back in, you see your home the way buyers will. Many sellers find the moment emotional. That reaction is the same one buyers feel, and it is exactly what sells a home.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Living in Your Staged Home

You stay in your home while it is listed. Moving out is never a requirement, and the only day you need to be away is stage day.

Use the staged furniture as your own. Sit on the chairs, sleep in the beds, and treat every piece with the same care you give your own belongings. All linens are professionally laundered after each stage. The simplest rule for the listing period: live a little lighter than normal.

Your show-ready routine

- Keep personal items under counters and in baskets, and bring them out only when you need them
- Keep the kitchen and bathrooms clear and clean every day
- Ventilate after cooking, especially before a showing
- Turn on the lamps before you leave for a showing
- Be ready to switch from daily life to show-ready quickly, because Milton's market can move fast

If your home does not sell right away

The initial staging arrangement covers about 60 days, and a month-to-month continuation can be arranged after that. Tara and your agent may refresh pieces or adjust the presentation mid-listing at no extra cost. Staging furniture is never removed while your home is still listed.

Holidays

Skip the Christmas decorations while your home is listed. They make rooms feel smaller, and a tree in the listing photos tells every buyer exactly when the photos were taken.

After your home sells

Tara's crew returns with movers and removes every staging piece, usually in a few hours. Staging inventory stays in our rotating program, so individual pieces are rarely for sale, but Tara is happy to help you find similar pieces or recreate the look in your next home through a Staging for Living consultation.

CHAPTER NINE

Stage Day With the Flowers Team

We built staging into how we sell homes because it works, and it is one of the reasons our listings outperform the Milton average.

The Flowers Team at Royal LePage Meadowtowne Realty is an all-women team led by Amy Flowers, licensed since 2001. Our turnkey service brings in-house staging, professional photography, a dedicated marketing team and a concierge who guides you from your first conversation to closing day.

Our staging is led by Tara Llewellyn, certified in Professional Home Staging and Home Redesign through QC Design School since 2009, and voted Milton's number one home stager in the Milton Readers' Choice Awards every year since 2017. Because Tara is part of our team, your agent, your stager, our marketing team and our photographer all work from the same plan.

#1 Ranked in Milton since 2009	**Top 1%** Royal LePage Chairman's Club since 2009	**500+** Five-star Google reviews
23.18 Average days on market, vs 30 for Milton	**100.02%** Sale-to-list ratio, vs 98.67% for Milton	**$13,832** More in our sellers' pockets, on average
1,000+ Homes staged by Tara Llewellyn	**#1** Voted home stager in Milton since 2017	**3,000+** Milton families served

Performance figures based on 2025 independent data and a Milton average sale price of $1,040,000.

Ready to Plan Your Stage Day?

Your staging consultation with Tara is the first step. Call us at 905-878-6232 or visit flowersteam.ca, and we will plan your stage day around your move.

905-878-6232 FLOWERSTEAM.CA

FLOWERS TEAM REAL ESTATE

Milton's Home Staging Team

The Flowers Team · Royal LePage Meadowtowne Realty · 475 Main St E, Milton, ON L9T 1R1
905-878-6232 · flowersteam.ca

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