How-To Guide: Reel Estate Secrets

How to Make a Pro Listing Video in Instagram — in 10 Minutes Flat

The step-by-step companion to Brandon Lara's class · KW Memorial

Use this guide during class, then keep it on your phone for listing day.
It assumes: iPhone or Android, latest Instagram app, and the 5 practice clips (in portrait / 9:16, 720×1280) saved to your camera roll — plus the 9 practice stills, which are landscape (1408×768). The stills are still relevant: they are the reframe demo in Part 1, the backup slides if a clip won't load, and the cover-frame source in Part 7. Your own listing photos will usually be landscape too, so learning to reframe a still is the skill you'll reuse most on listing day.

1. Front Entrance (day)
2. Living Room
3. Kitchen
4. Floating Staircase
5. Twilight Exterior + Pool

> Menu names can move slightly between Instagram updates and phone models. If a button isn't where this guide says, look for the same words nearby — the steps and the order do not change.

BEFORE YOU START (2 minutes, do this once)

1. Update Instagram in the App Store / Google Play.
2. In Instagram: profile photo → menu (menu) → Settings and privacy → Media quality → turn ON "Upload at highest quality."
3. Download the 5 practice clips to your camera roll. Confirm you can play each one — they are portrait (vertical), about 10 seconds each.
4. Turn on Do Not Disturb, so notifications don't pop up while you edit or record a voiceover.
5. Find a quiet spot for the voiceover step later. A parked car works great.

You are building: a 12–15 second Reel, 4–5 clips, hook first, one feature tag per clip, music low, captions on, ready to post.

PART 1 — START THE REEL AND IMPORT YOUR CLIPS

1. Open Instagram. Tap + (Create) → Reel.
2. Tap the photo/gallery icon and select your clips in tour order.

Multi-select if your phone allows it, in this order:
Front Entrance → Living Room → Kitchen → Staircase → Twilight Pool.
Order matters: you are walking the viewer through the home.

3. Tap Next. Instagram places the clips on one editing timeline.
4. Check the framing (portrait clips — quick check only):

Tap a clip, look at the preview. The subject (front door, sofa, island, staircase, pool) should sit in the middle of the frame. The 5 practice clips are already portrait, so this is a 10-second check, not a fix.

5. Reframe a landscape still (the 2-minute demo — do this once, on the Kitchen or Twilight still): Drop the still in and look at it unframed first: Instagram will either letterbox it (black bars top and bottom) or fill-crop it and cut the sides off. Then fix it: pinch / use Fill to frame it vertically, drag to re-center the subject (island / pool), and do not accept the default center crop. This is the same move you'll use on your own landscape listing photos (MLS / horizontal phone shots) — and on any still you use as a backup slide if a clip won't load.

Checkpoint: 5 portrait clips, in order, filling the vertical screen — and you can reframe any landscape still in under a minute.

PART 2 — TRIM IT TIGHT (The 1-to-2 Second Cut Rule)

Goal: 12–15 seconds total. Viewers decide in 2 seconds and leave during anything static.

1. Tap Edit video to open the timeline.
2. Tap Clip 1. Drag its end handle left until the clip is about 2–3 seconds — keep the movement (approach / walk-in), cut the still start and end.
3. Repeat for every clip: ~2–3 seconds each, cut on movement. Cut *while* the camera is moving, panning, or light is changing — not in the middle of a still moment.
4. Front Entrance and Twilight Pool can run a touch longer (~3 sec): the first sets the scene, the last is your payoff.
5. Play it through once, top to bottom. If any second feels like "nothing is happening," trim that clip again.

Math check: 5 clips × ~2.5 sec = ~12–13 seconds. Perfect.

PART 3 — ADD THE HOOK AND FEATURE TEXT

Text is timed. A tag should exist only while its clip is on screen.

1. Tap Text (Aa). Type your hook. Keep it under 7 words. Use this one for practice: "Wait for the twilight pool shot…"
2. Choose one clean font/style and use it for the whole video. Add a solid background/shadow if the text is hard to read.
3. Drag the hook text to the middle band of the screen (safe zone, see box below). Then, in the timeline, drag the ends of its text bar so it covers only Clip 1 (first 2 seconds).

4. Add one feature tag per remaining clip — 3–5 words each:

• Living Room: "Walls of glass, all day light"

• Kitchen: "Gourmet chef's kitchen"

• Staircase: "That staircase though"

• Twilight Pool: "Twilight hits different"

5. For each tag: tap the text → set its timing in the timeline so it starts when its clip starts and ends when its clip ends.

6. One idea per clip. If a tag needs "and," split it or move it to the caption.

THE SAFE ZONE — memorize this

Top of screen = Instagram puts your username / template info there.

Bottom = caption, music credit, and buttons cover it.

Right edge = Like / Comment / Share rail.

Keep ALL text in the middle band. Test: preview the Reel — if your thumb would cover the text where the caption sits, move it up.

PART 4 — CAPTIONS (Auto, Then Proofread)

Most buyers first watch muted. Captions are not optional.

1. In the editor, tap the Sticker icon → Captions.

2. Let Instagram transcribe, choose a caption style you can read easily, and tap Done.

3. Proofread every line — tap a word to fix it. Auto-captions regularly get these wrong: prices, street names, "suite," "quartz," "primary" (for the main bedroom/bath), and names.

4. Drag captions so they don't cover your feature text. If they clash, move the feature text up slightly — keep both in the middle band, captions lower-middle, feature tag upper-middle.

No voiceover in your Reel? Captions still help: they caption music-era Reels poorly, so at minimum make sure your on-screen text tells the whole story with the sound off.

PART 5 — MUSIC + VOICEOVER (Audio Mixing)

1. Tap Music / Audio. Browse or search for a track that fits a home tour (upbeat, no lyrics fighting your voiceover).
Tap it to add it.

• If a song is missing or greyed out: that is a licensing restriction on many business accounts. It is not you. Pick an available track, or skip music and use the voiceover only.

2. Tap the volume / audio controls. Set music to 10–15%. Rule: music is the carpet, not the conversation.

3. Voiceover (practice script below): go to your quiet spot. Tap Voiceover / microphone, hold the phone ~6 inches from

your mouth, and record over Clips 1–3:
> "Step inside this modern showpiece — walls of glass, an open
> living space made for entertaining, and a chef's kitchen with a
> waterfall island. Wait until you see it at twilight."
(~12 seconds at a natural pace. Smile while you read — it changes the take. One full take; re-record only if you stumble on a fact.)

4. Re-check levels together: voice clear on top, music underneath. If the voice is buried, drop music to 10%.

Checkpoint: Play it muted (story makes sense), then with sound (voice clear, music low). Both passes must work.

PART 6 — USE A TEMPLATE NEXT TIME (The 60-Second Shortcut)

After class, this is how you repeat everything above in about a minute.

1. Find a listing Reel you like. If it was made from a template, you'll see "Use Template" above the creator's username. No button = no template. Move on.
2. Tap Use Template. The screen shows pre-timed clip slots.
3. Tap each slot and swap in your clips in tour order (exterior → living → kitchen → wow → hero).
4. Replace the text with your hook + feature tags, re-check the safe zone (templates move text), and re-check captions.
5. Save good finds: on any inspiring listing Reel, tap ■ → Save, and file it in a collection called "Listing Inspiration" so it's findable on listing day.

A template gives you timing, not a tour. If its cuts fight your clip order, change the template — not the story.

PART 7 — COVER, CAPTION, AND POST

1. Tap Next to the share screen. Tap Edit cover.
2. Scrub to the twilight exterior / pool frame (or upload the twilight still from the practice set). That is your cover.
3. Then do the grid check — this is a separate step: use Crop / profile grid adjustment so the 1:1 square version does not cut off your hook or the house. What looks fine full-screen can be cropped badly on your profile.
4. Write the caption from the template:

> [Hook line]
> [Beds / baths / sq ft] in [Neighborhood / City] —
> [feature 1], [feature 2], and [feature 3].
> Price: [Price] · [Address / Area]
> DM "TOUR" for private showing details.

> 3–5 hashtags max, e.g. #HoustonRealEstate #JustListed #[Neighborhood]

5. Add the location tag. Tag a collaborator (listing agent / brokerage) only if they've agreed.

6. 30-second compliance pass before Share:

• Price, beds/baths, sq ft, showing details — all accurate?

• Seller's permission to post this home — confirmed?

• AI-generated or virtually staged imagery — disclosed? Practice-house footage must never be posted as a real listing.

• Language describes the property, not a type of buyer or neighbor? (Avoid "perfect for families," "safe neighborhood," unverified school / "walking distance" claims.)

When in doubt, check with your broker before posting.

7. Tap Share.

PART 8 — THE FIRST HOUR AFTER POSTING (Where Leads Come From)

1. Pin a comment on your Reel repeating the CTA: "DM 'TOUR' and I'll send showing times + the full photo set."

2. Share the Reel to your Story with a poll sticker: "Tour this week?" — [Yes] / [Tell me more]

3. Reply to every comment in the first hour. A fast reply is a conversation, and conversations are showings.

4. At 24 hours, check Insights: watch time / completion, shares, and saves matter more than likes. Note the one thing that worked and repeat it next time.

TROUBLESHOOTING — FAST FIXES

Problem — Fix
Sound missing / greyed out — Business-account licensing. Use an available track or voiceover only.
Post looks blurry — "Upload at highest quality" was off, or weak Wi-Fi. Turn it on, re-post on strong Wi-Fi.
Caption word / price wrong — Tap the word in the caption and edit it. Always proofread prices and street names.
Text hidden behind caption/buttons — It's below the safe zone. Drag it to the middle band and preview again.
Subject cropped out — Re-open the clip/still, pinch/drag to re-center the subject. Landscape stills need this step — portrait clips usually don't.
Reel feels long and draggy — Too many clips / static middles. Cut to 4–5 clips, 1–2 sec cuts.
No "Use Template" button — That Reel wasn't templated. Use one from "Listing Inspiration."
Music drowns the voiceover — Music to 10%; re-record voiceover closer to the mic in a quiet place.
Buttons don't match this guide — App update moved them. Update Instagram, restart — same steps, new shelf.
Clip won't load in class — Build with the landscape still photos instead (same steps — reframe each still to 9:16 first, Part 1 Step 5) and swap clips in later.

PRACTICE EXERCISE (Do This in Class)

Build the 12-second tour:

[ ] 4–5 portrait clips imported in tour order

[ ] Each trimmed to ~2–3 seconds (12–15 sec total)
[ ] Hook on Clip 1, first 2 seconds only
[ ] Timed feature text on Kitchen and Staircase clips
[ ] All text in the safe zone — checked on preview
[ ] Music at 10–15%
[ ] Voiceover recorded or captions on + proofread
[ ] Cover chosen + grid crop checked
[ ] Shown to a partner, saved as draft, or posted

SHOOT YOUR OWN LISTING NEXT TIME (10-Minute Shot List)

Shoot vertical from the start · wipe the lens · lock exposure on a bright window, then lower brightness a touch · walk slowly, phone at chest height, elbows in · start moving *before* you press record · 3–4 seconds per shot:

1) Front approach 2) Living room wide pan 3) Kitchen push-in to the island 4) One "wow" detail 5) Backyard / pool — and return at twilight for the hero shot if you can. Grab the cover as a still, too.

How-To Guide for "Reel Estate Secrets: Pro Listing Videos in 10 Mins Flat!"
Instructor: Brandon Lara, KW Memorial, Houston.
Practice property is AI-generated for training — not a real listing.
This guide is teaching material, not legal advice. Follow your broker's
and MLS's current rules for advertising, staging, and AI disclosure.