

EASY, AFFORDABLE HOME REFRESHES

It's no secret that most boomers have more equity tied up in their homes than they do in savings, so when it's time to sell, you'll want to maximize the value of your home – without breaking the bank.

Allison Jaffe, Broker of Key Real Estate Services, cautions that you'll first want to cure violations and repair whatever is broken. If you've continually cared for and maintained your home, here are some inexpensive ways to get more pleasure from your home **and** attract prospective buyers.



1) Improve your home's curb appeal.

- Hide those garbage cans in a storage shed; similarly, stow away bicycles and yard tools.
- Replace your mailbox and house number for a quick refresh.
- In season, place planters at the front of your home to add color or replace the dead plants in your existing planters.
- Paint shutters, trim, and the front door (or consider replacing it).
- Replace dated or rusty outdoor lighting, especially the one at your front door.
- Lay down a new doormat to welcome visitors.
- Trim back and shape overgrown bushes and trees; make sure the lawn is mowed.
- Reset any paving stones that may present a tripping hazard.
- Spray paint rusty patio furniture and arrange it into conversation groups.

2) Spruce up your kitchen.

- Replace dated knobs and handles on the cabinets.
- Jaffe suggests you add some under-cabinet lighting; adhesive-backed LED puck lights or rope lights are easy to install and very inexpensive.
- Install a new kitchen faucet to bring some contemporary lines and finishes to your kitchen. Jaffe warns not to do this if it will cause too much of a mismatch.
- Replace your dishwasher if it no longer matches other updated stainless steel appliances.

This is a more expensive refresh, but if your dishwasher still has its original black panel door, you can modernize the whole kitchen with this one fix buyers will appreciate.

3) Flooring and walls can make all the difference.

- If your wood floors or carpeting are showing excessive wear and tear, bring in a new area rug. You usually won't want to replace wall-to-wall carpeting since new owners are likely to have their own taste preferences.
- If there is hardwood flooring beneath your worn or dated wall-to-wall carpeting, consider ripping out the carpeting.
- It may not be economical to repaint your entire home, but if there's a room begging for a color change or in particularly bad shape, paint that room a neutral color (other than white) and use semi-gloss white for the trim.

4) Declutter...

before placing your house on the market. Says Jaffe, "A room full of neatly stacked boxes is better than a room filled with "stuff"!"

- Your realtor may also suggest paring down your furniture to make rooms brighter and improve traffic flow.
- Depersonalize by packing up the family photos and artwork that may be crowding your countertops and shelves.
- Remove artwork that might be objectionable to a prospective buyer.

5) Small fixes matter.

- Replace burned out light bulbs – inside and outside.
- Replace cracked or torn lamp shades.
- Swap out switch plates and outlet covers if they've been painted over, are broken, chipped or mismatched for a clean, uniform appearance. This is especially effective if the interior has been freshly painted.

6) Clean!

- Bring in a professional cleaning crew for a one-time thorough cleaning if necessary. A clean house attracts buyers and a dirty one repels them.

Why do these things? "The easy answer is to have buyers like what they see in your house," remarks Jaffe, "But the more important reason is so buyers are not distracted from your home's positive attributes by perceived problems and faults." We agree and think it makes sense to maximize your most valuable asset!