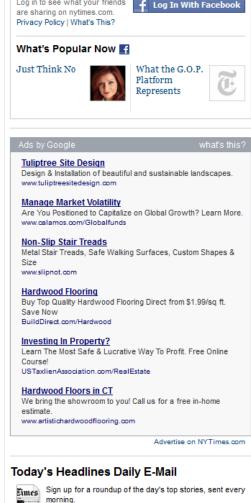
HOME for articles and slide shows on

interior design and life at home.

If the hardwood stairs look worn, though, you should refinish them or add a carpet runner down the center that leaves the edges of each step exposed. "It's less expensive

than full carpeting," Ms. Marcantonio said. "And it provides a nice, crisp look that people are looking for."

Lynne Scalo, an interior designer in Westport, Conn., suggested adding a tasteful runner even if the wood underneath isn't worn. Particularly in large houses with high ceilings, she said, a runner can make the space feel warmer while providing a more forgiving surface for children.



See Sample | Privacy Policy

Sign Up

Ms. Scalo often uses Grand Tournai carpeting by Merida. "It's really fresh looking, wears well and has an organic feeling to it," she said, that resembles sea grass, but it is actually made from 60 percent wool and 40 percent sisal. It also comes in neutral hues (Ms. Scalo's favorite is Honey) that appeal to a wide range of tastes - perfect when your intention is to sell.

"It's not million-dollar carpet, but it's also not cheap," she said. (The retail price is \$17.90 a square foot; information: 800-345-2200 or meridameridian.com.)

Then again, carpet is not a good thing to skimp on. As Ms. Scalo put it, "Cheap tends to look cheap," a signal you would not want to send to potential buyers.

To finish the edges of a runner, she typically uses suede binding and leaves about three inches of exposed wood on either side.

It's an investment, she acknowledged, but making your staircase as appealing as possible is worth the time, money and effort.

"A lot of people instinctively react to a home," Ms. Scalo said. "Their gift isn't in imagining what the space could be, so the closer you can get it to a streamlined, clean, well-done and thoughtful environment, the better."

Questions about repairs or redecorating in preparation for putting a home on the market may be sent to marketready@nytimes.com. Unpublished questions cannot be answered individually.

A version of this article appeared in print on August 23, 2012, on page D4 of the New York edition with the headline: Market Ready.

📝 FACEBOOK 🔰 TWITTER 🧗 GOOGLE+ 🖂 E-MAIL 🛨 SHARE

, Get 50% Off The New York Times & Free All Digital Access.

MOST E-MAILED

MOST VIEWED

1. Father's Age Is Linked to Risk of Autism and Schizophrenia



MAUREEN DOWD Just Think No



GAIL COLLINS The Sexual Spirit of '76



4. From Bible-Belt Pastor to Atheist



JENNIFER FINNEY BOYLAN A Freshman All Over Again



6. THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN We Need a 'Conservative' Party

- 7. Tiny Hawaiian Island Will See if New Owner Tilts at Windmills
- 8. CAMPAIGN STOPS Has Obama Made the Job Situation Worse?



9. OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR Disney World on the Hudson

10. CAMPAIGN STOPS All the Single Ladies

Go to Complete List »

Show My Recommendations





