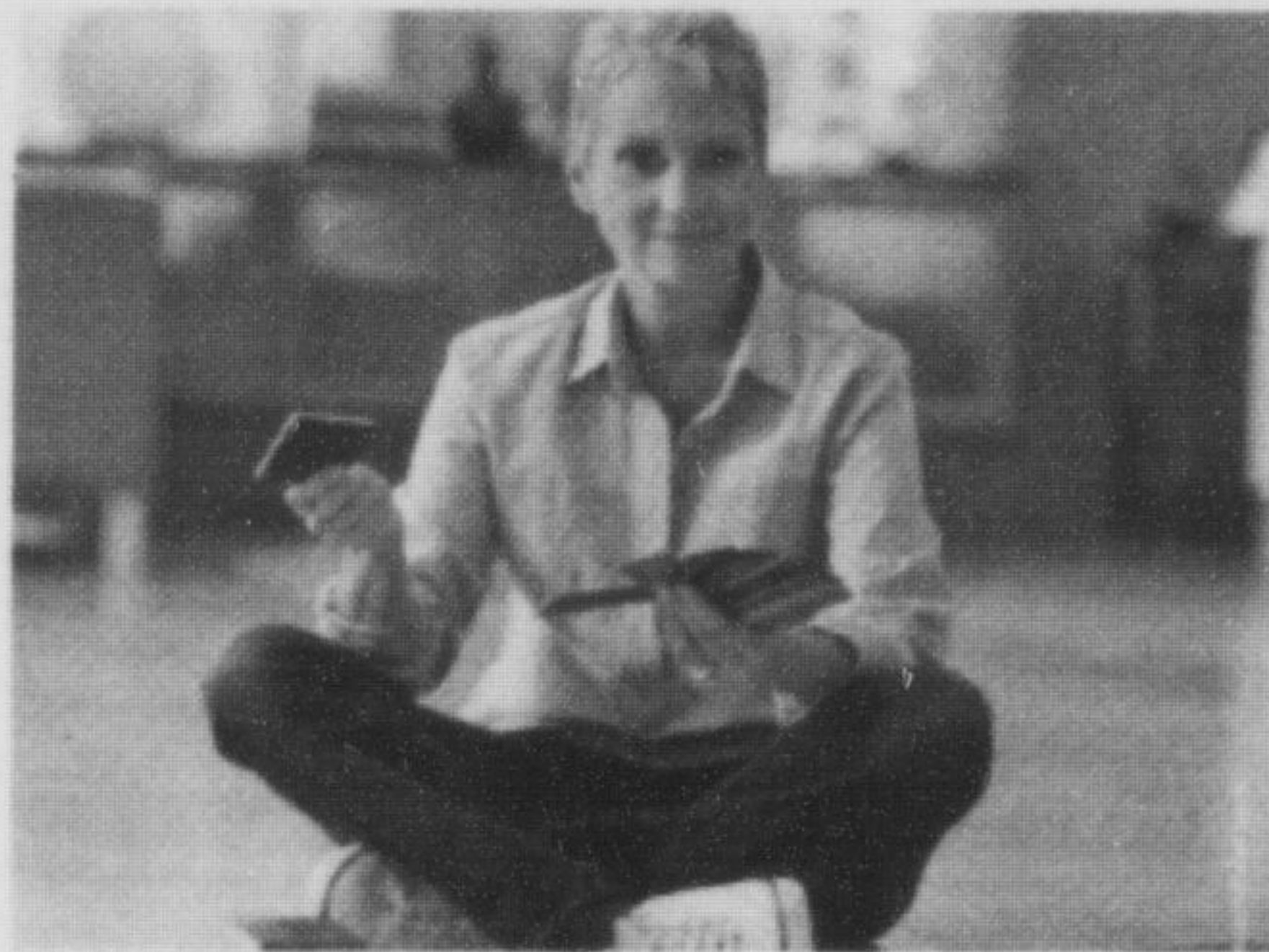


5 budget-friendly flooring facelifts

A smart way to increase the value of your home, or to sell it quickly, is to update your flooring. Hardwood is a popular option, but you may want to consider a few alternatives that could be easier on your pocketbook.

• "Flooring on a budget has come a long way from the days of vinyl cushion floor," says Royal LePage broker Carlo Racioppo. "There are a multitude of options available to suit a modest budget without sacrificing style." Racioppo suggests the following options as alternatives to pricier hardwood, depending upon your square footage:



1. Vinyl flooring.

Vinyl flooring has been popular with home owners for decades due to its resiliency against scratches and its economical appeal. Modern vinyl tiles can provide the illusion of stone or ceramic and cost as little as \$2 per square foot.

2. Cork.

Cork flooring is attractive, durable and 100 per cent renewable. A cost-efficient alternative to hardwood, it is easy on your feet and relatively sound-proof.

3. Concrete.

If dull gray stone comes to mind when you think of concrete, think again. Concrete floors are becoming increasingly popular for their sustainability, low maintenance, longevity and versatility. Concrete is easily stained or painted and can be personalized to suit your style.

4. Laminate.

Laminate floors, like vinyl, can provide the illusion of a more luxurious floor, but are far more affordable. Laminate is highly resistant to stains, scratches and general wear and tear.

5. Engineered wood.

Engineered wood is made from real wood and provides the same texture and look as hardwood, but at a fraction of the price. It also experiences less expansion and contraction than some traditional flooring materials.

You need not break the bank to give your floors a facelift. More information is available online at www.royallepage.ca.

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