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Downsizing for Seniors: Planning and Organizing for Your Move

There are countless details to consider when preparing for a move. Making all the logistical arrangements, getting rid of the stuff you're not taking with you, carefully packing valuables, preparing your new home, and much more. It's considerably more difficult for seniors, who may need help preparing and carrying it all out, whether it's across town or cross country. Perhaps the hardest part of all is downsizing, determining which of your possessions - the accumulation of countless memories - can be donated, given away or thrown out. It's a good time to lean on loved ones who can help you make some of those difficult decisions and assist with tasks like finding a reputable moving company or figuring out what to do with your pets on moving day.

Remember, this is likely to be an emotional process, especially if you've lived in your home for a long time. It may feel like you're leaving behind a lifetime of hopes and dreams that even the prospect of a new home can't dispel. Take it slow and be considerate of everyone's feelings - family members who are helping you prepare may be distraught as well and have different ideas about how you should dispose of items that may have great meaning for them as well.

Sort it out

Be as organized and methodical as possible as you begin to [declutter](#). Sort possessions according to their function or by room, organizing according to what you know you'll need and want to keep and what you can do without. As you consider each object, ask yourself whether there's room for it in your new home, whether it serves any useful purpose and, if not, whether someone close to you may want it. Take this approach with your closets and other storage space, which may contain the majority of your oldest belongings. Separate objects that you'll

donate, give to family or friends, and what you'll leave behind. Consider beginning with [miscellaneous items](#) that don't belong in any given room (you may have a lot of these); this is a good way to find and rule out what you won't be keeping. You might also think about setting aside some things you can sell online (i.e. eBay) or in a garage sale.

Keep it consistent

One good way to simplify your move is to take pictures or video of your home before you pack everything up. This record of what goes where can help when you're putting it all together after the move. If you have a [layout](#) of your new home, try using it to arrange the furniture and put decorations where they belong. This part of the moving process should be planned out before you begin sorting and organizing.

Don't overdo it

Anyone who's ever moved knows what an exhausting ordeal it can be. If it's within your means, hire a professional moving company to take care of everything, from boxing up to unloading. Look for a [senior move manager](#) in your area, someone with experience helping older adults downsize and move. Or line up friends and family to help with the most physically demanding parts of the job. Above all, take care of yourself. Don't be tempted to overdo it and risk getting hurt or aggravating a medical condition.

Prepping your new home

Another way to make things easy is to prepare the new house. Set up closet and cabinet systems, clean out the hard-to-reach spots, and pack some essentials to get you through the first day or two. If you have the opportunity, do some touch-up painting. Consider hiring a maid service. The average cost of cleaning a home interior ranges from \$118 to \$240, and takes about five hours.

Be kind to yourself as you work through what can be a stressful time in your life. Be considerate of each other's feelings, especially when it comes to downsizing and jettisoning possessions that have been a fixture in your home for generations. It'll all come together once you're moved in and begin making the new house your own.