

Preparing the Home: Where to Start

How to downsize, organize, and move forward without overwhelm

WHY THIS PART FEELS SO HARD

Preparing a parent's home is more than just cleaning things out.

It often involves:

- Decades of belongings
- Emotional attachments
- Difficult decisions

Feeling overwhelmed at this stage is completely normal.



THE BIGGEST MISTAKE

Most families think they need to:

- “go through everything before doing anything”

That leads to:

- Delays
- Frustration
- No progress

Momentum matters more than speed.

THE 4-CATEGORY METHOD

For every item, choose:

- Keep (going to new home)
- Family (given to loved ones)
- Donate / Sell
- Discard

Avoid “maybe” piles—they slow everything down.

Early wins build confidence.

You don't need to do everything —you just need to start.

A SIMPLER WAY TO APPROACH IT

Focus on progress, not perfection

Start with:

- the easiest areas
- the least emotional items
- small, manageable sessions

WHERE TO START

Don't start with:

- photos
- keepsakes
- highly emotional spaces

Start with:

- kitchen items
- linens
- storage areas
- duplicate items

HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU DO?

You do NOT need to:

- Empty the entire house immediately
- Make every decision upfront

Focus on: What's needed for the next step

- Moving soon? → Prioritize essentials
- Selling soon? → Clear key areas first

Let your timeline guide your effort.



“Even a few hours of progress can make a big difference”

WHEN TO GET HELP

You don't have to do this alone.

Consider help if:

- The home is overwhelming
- Time is limited
- Emotions are slowing progress

Options include:

- Downsizing Specialists
- Estate Sale Companies
- Family Support
- Selling the Home AS IS



COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

- Trying to do everything at once
- Starting with emotional items
- Not having a simple system
- Waiting too long to begin

Small progress now prevents big stress later.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

1. Start with one room or area
2. Use the 4-category method
3. Focus on progress

—NOT Perfection



Tools to Move you Forward

This is one part of The Houston Senior Move System

A 7 Step System to help families move a parent out of the home and into the right next stage—without delays, confusion, or costly mistakes.

THE HOUSTON SENIOR MOVE SYSTEM™

A 7 Step System to help families move a parent out of the home and into the right next stage—without delays, confusion, or costly mistakes.

Step 1: Is it Time?

- Signs it's time
- What happens if you wait
- First steps

Step 2: Have the Conversation

- How to approach
- Common objections
- Follow Up
- Ideas to move forward

Step 3: Make the Plan

- Create a Timeline
- Move-first vs Sell-first
- Coordination
- Finding Support

Step 4: Understand the Costs

- Types of facilities
- Costs associated with each
- How it's paid for
- Next Steps

Step 5: Choose the Right Place

- Comparison tool
- Questions to ask
- Red flags to watch for
- 23 Page Full Service Tool/Guide

Preparing the home is one step in a larger plan to help families move a parent safely and smoothly. It's normal to go back and forth between the steps.

Decide – Recognize it's time to act

Plan – Create a timeline and approach

Choose Care – Find the right living option

Understand Costs – Know how it will be funded

Prepare the Home – Downsize and get organized

Move – Coordinate the transition

This guide will help you take the next step—preparing the home without feeling overwhelmed



Is it Time?



Have the Conversation



Make the Plan



Understand the Costs



Choose the Right Place



Prepare the Home



Make the Move

If you're in Houston and need help figuring out next steps, I'm happy to walk through your situation and help you create a simple plan.

Call or Text 602.327.1244

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Resources to keep in mind

Most families try to handle everything themselves at first.

Having the right people involved early can save time, reduce stress, and prevent costly mistakes. Feel free to record other team or family members that you can count on to help.

1. Real Estate Specialist

- Can provide multiple avenues to sell the home in addition to a traditional listing such as buying it directly and/or multiple finance options. Can coordinate selling the home AS IS. Which allow you to take valuables, keepsakes, and personal items and leave the rest.

2. Downsizing / Move Manager

- Helps sort, organize, and reduce overwhelm
- Coordinates packing and logistics



Downsizing Checklist by Room

BEDROOM – PRIORITIZE COMFORT & NECESSITY

✓ Keep:

- Bed frame & mattress (if suitable for new space)
- Essential bedding (2-3 sets of sheets, 1-2 comforters)
- A small selection of seasonal clothes (use the one-year rule: If you haven't worn it in a year, donate it!)
- Nightstand & reading lamp

✗ Donate/Discard:

- Extra or unused furniture (dressers, chairs, bedside tables)
- Excess linens, blankets, and throw pillows
- Old or unused clothing, shoes, and accessories
- Bulky or duplicate items (like extra lamps or nightstands)

KITCHEN – STREAMLINE TO EVERYDAY ESSENTIALS

✓ Keep:

- A small set of dishes (2-4 plates, bowls, mugs, and glasses)
- Basic cookware (1-2 pots, 1-2 pans, baking sheet)
- Everyday utensils (silverware, a few serving spoons)
- 1-2 appliances used daily (e.g., coffee maker, microwave)

✗ Donate/Discard:

- Specialty kitchen gadgets rarely used (waffle makers, bread machines, etc.)
- Excess cookware, plates, and glassware
- Expired pantry items and spices
- Large or duplicate appliances
- Excess Tupperware with missing lids

LIVING ROOM – KEEP IT FUNCTIONAL & COZY

✓ Keep:

- Comfortable seating (downsized sofa or favorite armchair)
- A few sentimental decor pieces (framed photos, heirlooms)
- A small bookshelf or storage unit for organization
- TV or entertainment system (if used regularly)

✗ Donate/Discard:

- Large, heavy furniture that won't fit in the new space (china cabinets, oversized coffee tables)
- Excess decorative items (vases, figurines, artwork)
- Extra furniture that won't serve a purpose in the new home
- Outdated media (DVDs, CDs, VHS tapes)

BATHROOM – DECLUTTER & ORGANIZE FOR EFFICIENCY

✓ Keep:

- Everyday toiletries (limit to one of each item)
- Essential towels (2-4 bath towels, 2 hand towels, 2 washcloths)
- Small first-aid kit
- A few storage bins for organization

🚫 Donate/Discard:

- Expired medications and skincare products
- Old or unused makeup and beauty supplies
- Worn-out or mismatched towels and washcloths
- Excess travel-size toiletries from hotels

HALLWAY / ENTRYWAY – REDUCE CLUTTER & IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY

✓ Keep:

- A small console table or key holder
- Coat rack or hooks for outerwear
- A daily use bag or purse
- Walking cane, mobility aids (if needed)

🚫 Donate/Discard:

- Old or unworn coats, hats, and shoes
- Stacks of unread mail and paperwork
- Decorative clutter (extra vases, small furniture)

LAUNDRY ROOM – ONLY KEEP THE ESSENTIALS

✓ Keep:

- Laundry detergent, fabric softener, and stain removers
- 1-2 laundry baskets
- An iron and ironing board (if regularly used)

🚫 Donate/Discard:

- Old, worn-out cleaning rags
- Expired cleaning supplies
- Extra or broken hangers

STORAGE SPACES (GARAGE, ATTIC, BASEMENT, CLOSETS) – DECLUTTER DEEP STORAGE

✓ Keep:

- Important paperwork (store in labeled folders)
- Essential tools (hammer, screwdriver, flashlight)
- Sentimental items (limit to one small box or digitize)

🚫 Donate/Discard:

- Old holiday decorations that aren't used
- Extra tools, sports equipment, and duplicate hardware
- Boxes of "someday" items that haven't been touched in years
- Old furniture, broken appliances, outdated electronics