

Downsizing Made Easy Guide

let's downsize

5 EASY STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL MOVE

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TRE® TEIFKE REAL ESTATE

We at Shamsie Home Group understand that making a move can sometimes feel overwhelming. That is exactly why our team of experts have taken extra steps to develop a turn-key process designed simplify the downsizing or relocation process.

Our team is prepared to assist you in developing a plan of action––on your terms and in your timeframe, leaving you feeling equipped and empowered as you make new lifestyle changes. Just say the word and we will happily manage every detail of your move—with care, courtesy, and excellence—just the way you would do it yourself.

As a client you receive both the physical and emotional support necessary to handle even the most difficult relocation decisions and tasks. Whether you're looking for a little boost to get started or you choose to delegate every detail of your move, we are here for you, ready to tailor our comprehensive turn-key solution to suit your specific needs.

- √ Full service residential real estate sales for home buyers and sellers
- √ Guided residential and senior living community tours
- √ Senior living community, maintenance free, and 55+ housing locator services
- √ Move management – hands-on coordination and oversight of the entire move process
- √ Coordination of professional packing and moving services
- √ New home set-up and organization
- √ Estate liquidation coordination and oversight

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DOWNSIZING MADE EASY

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ABOUT

Downsizing Made Easy

Somewhere between sorting through your possessions, choosing a new home, and interviewing movers, it suddenly hits you: Downsizing seems like a lot of work!

With a little bit of extra guidance and knowledge from those who have gone before us, the process can be vastly simplified, and that is what *Downsizing Made Easy* is all about. This guide was created with you in mind. It is intended to provide you with the tools necessary to simplify the downsizing process and the knowledge to move forward with courage and confidence.

There is a high likelihood that whomever provided you with this guide is a trusted advisor and will be right there with you on your journey! Ultimately you get to choose your experience - easy or stressful - we trust you will choose easy!

5 Easy Steps at a Glance



Step 1: Creating a Plan

Creating a plan that fits your current lifestyle and takes into consideration possible future care needs means first doing some research. Consider your interests, financial situation, location of friends and family, and how you envision living life to the fullest. Choosing a place that aligns with your goals may take some time, but it's worth the effort!

Step 2: Communicating with Family & Friends

Communicating your plans with others doesn't necessarily mean asking for their permission or opinions. It can be beneficial, however, to keep family members and friends in the loop concerning future housing plans. If later you need or want support, they will be in a better position to provide it.



Step 3: Surrounding Yourself with Pro's

Surrounding yourself with highly qualified professionals guarantees you will have the needed support necessary to simplify your relocation. You will likely need the services of a variety of people both knowledgeable and skilled in downsizing moves, so getting to know them before you need them allows you an opportunity to make the best choice for your situation.



Step 4: Dealing with a House Full of Possessions

Dealing with a house full of possessions is often what creates overwhelm and dread. It can be the uncertainty of where to begin, reluctance to part with treasured possessions, or the physical work required that creates a stumbling block. The good news is there are trained professionals who can help with this step. By focusing your attention primarily on what you need and/or want, you can easily navigate the downsizing process and let the pro's handle the rest!

Step 5: Celebrating a New Lifestyle

Celebrating your new lifestyle may sound like an easy step. The truth is, however, the impact of downsizing is often underestimated. During the hustle and bustle of the moving process, emotions can get postponed. It is just as important to care for your emotional well-being as it is your physical well-being.



STEP 1

CREATE A PLAN THAT FITS YOUR LIFESTYLE AND FUTURE NEEDS

The first phase of creating your plan involves doing some research. Consider your interests, financial situation, location of your friends and family, and how you envision living life to the fullest. Then choose a place that you think will best fit your lifestyle. Take some time with this step even if you haven't fully decided whether you intend to move. Having a plan in place is an important part of the process, even if your plans continue to evolve.

Remember, living life to the fullest requires attention to our physical, emotional and mental well-being. Most people think of health in terms of physical well-being, but it is more than that. In planning for your new lifestyle, don't forget to build in the things that contribute to all areas of your optimal health including social activities, hobbies and relationships.

On the following pages are some questions and forms that will help you cast your vision of your future lifestyle and your plan for addressing your future needs.

DESIGN YOUR LIFE...

Your Way!

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU MOVE

What type of lifestyle do I need and/or want (now and future)?

- Do I need assistance with health care or meals? Now? Future?
- Do I need transportation? Now? Future?
- Can I live independently? If so, for how long?
- Do I want to stay close to my current home or move out of the area?
- Is my family involved? If so, in what way?
- Do I have friends or activities that I want to stay near?
- What type of activities do I enjoy?
- Do I want apartment-style living, an age segregated community, a private residence, a townhouse, a patio home, or other arrangement?

Where do I stand financially?

- What is my current monthly income?
- Will my income change? If so, what will my future income look like?
- How much do I have in savings and investments?
- How much equity will I receive from the sale of my home?
- How much will I realistically earn from the sale of my household belongings?
- What are my monthly/annual expenses?
- To what degree will my family be contributing to my moving and/or living expenses?
- What benefits might I have that will offset current or future housing expenses?

What is necessary to prepare for a future move?

- Which items do I want to keep and take with me to my next home?
- Who will assist me with the details of the move? Family? Friends? Pro's?
- What date or time of year would I prefer to make a move?
- Will my home require repairs prior to selling?
- What have I learned from others who have been through this?
- Will my physician need to be consulted regarding my choice in residences?
- Who are the local professionals that can help with the physical part of my move?

HOUSING NEEDS CHECKLIST

1) Do I need/want a ground floor location?	YES ◯	NO ◯	MAYBE ◯
2) Do I need special accommodations for accessibility?	YES ◯	NO ◯	MAYBE ◯
3) Do I need assistance with any daily living activities? (Bathing, dressing, medications, toileting?)	YES ◯	NO ◯	MAYBE ◯
4) Do I need/want meals provided?	YES ◯	NO ◯	MAYBE ◯
5) Do I need/want special parking for a vehicle?	YES ◯	NO ◯	MAYBE ◯
6) Do I need/want a place that will accept pets?	YES ◯	NO ◯	MAYBE ◯
7) Do I need/want a place that offers social activities?	YES ◯	NO ◯	MAYBE ◯
8) Do I need/want maintenance and housekeeping provided?	YES ◯	NO ◯	MAYBE ◯
9) Do I need/want a yard, patio or porch?	YES ◯	NO ◯	MAYBE ◯
10) Do I want to be close to my current neighborhood?	YES ◯	NO ◯	MAYBE ◯
11) Do I need/want to own?	YES ◯	NO ◯	MAYBE ◯
12) Do I need/want to rent?	YES ◯	NO ◯	MAYBE ◯
13) If buying, how much can I afford for monthly house payments?		$	
14) If renting, how much can I afford for monthly rental payments?		$	

15) What other factors are important to me as I consider making a move?



your

SENIOR LIVING OPTIONS

Downsizing seniors have more housing options today than ever before. Here's a quick guide to the most commonly available senior living options.

Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRC)

Continuing Care Retirement Communities (often referred to as Life Care Communities) are residential campuses that provide seniors with the full spectrum of lifestyle and health care options - all on the same campus. CCRCs are age-restricted, so in order to qualify, at least one person in the household must meet a minimum age requirement. CCRC contract types vary with some providing all-inclusive "Life Care" guarantees.

Independent Senior Living Communities

Independent senior living communities are not state licensed and cannot provide healthcare services. Catering to independent seniors either age 55 or 62 and older, they offer a number of personal care services which vary from community to community. Independent senior living communities typically have full or partial kitchens, 2-3 meals daily (served in a common dining area), housekeeping, paid utilities, laundry facilities, 24-hour staffing, and common areas for resident use. Since these communities are not regulated, fees vary greatly and are based on market conditions, location, availability, and amenities offered.

Assisted Senior Living Communities

Assisted living communities are often the best choice for individuals who need more support than unlicensed independent living communities can offer, but who do not require 24-hour nursing care. Most residents will need some assistance with what are referred to as "activities of daily living" (ADLs), such as bathing, dressing, grooming, toileting and medication monitoring. Apartments are typically smaller than independent living communities, but many include a kitchen or kitchenette with microwave and small refrigerator. All meals are provided in a common dining area and various activities are designed to encourage social engagement, exercise, and overall well-being. Assisted living communities are state licensed and most are private-pay only.

Veterans and spouses of veterans may qualify for special “Aid and Attendance” benefits that can be used toward senior living expenses both at home and in residential care settings.



Longterm Healthcare Community

Known historically as “rest homes” or “nursing homes,” residents who move here are typically unable to live independently and require a level of assistance beyond that which assisted living communities are licensed to provide.

These state licensed healthcare communities offer 24-hour care, assistance with bathing, feeding, grooming, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and other medically necessary services. A healthcare community can be a temporary arrangement being used only as a rehabilitation stay (skilled care), or it can be permanent if on-going medical care and/or supervision is necessary (longterm care).

Memory Care

Many longterm healthcare communities and continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs) have added areas specifically designed for those with dementia. Such options are typically secured by locked doors and to safeguard residents who are apt to wander. While some memory care communities are incorporated with larger residential campuses, some are built as stand-alone communities specifically for memory care residents. Since specialized services and licensure vary from state to state and place to place, it is important to ask questions and tour all levels of care at each community.

Planned Adult Communities

Planned Adult Communities are characterized by clusters of apartments and condominiums or single-family homes built around a core of services and amenities. Residents can own their own property and must abide by the covenants, codes and restrictions administered by a governing body. The governing entity oversees common facilities, fees and assessments, and provisions of the association. In some parts of the country, such communities are promoted as recreational and are located on golf courses and lakes.



Condos, Townhomes, Garden Homes, Patio Homes and Duplexes

If a person prefers living in a multi-generational environment as opposed to an exclusively senior community, but still desires maintenance-free living, the option to downsize to a condominium, a town home, cottage or duplex, is an attractive alternative to adult community living.

Moving from a large home with a spacious yard to a duplex with a smaller outdoor space might be the perfect transition for someone who is still able to care for a household but who no longer has the stamina or desire to maintain a high- maintenance home and yard.

With some private housekeeping assistance and lawn care service provided, many empty nesters find that such a transition is less stressful than an immediate move to a senior living community. Though such an alternative is not specifically considered a “senior” community option, it is one that could certainly be considered if one is in good physical condition and prefers the diversity of multi-generational neighbors.

Subsidized Housing

There are a variety of senior complexes throughout the country that offer subsidized rent. Most are multi- level independent living apartments, and while they do not include the lavish décor of the lifecare and continuing care communities, they are typically well maintained and affordable. Most have long waiting lists so early application is critical.

WHAT TO ASK

SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY TOURS



- What floor plans are available and including locations within the community?
- Are pets allowed? If so, what are the restrictions and is there an additional fee?
- How many meals are included?
- How and when are meals served? Ask to see a menu. Dine with residents.
- Is covered parking available? If so, are there additional fees?
- Ask about options for additional care if unexpected medical needs arise.
- How often does the rent increase and by what percentage?
- Is there a guest apartment available for family members?
- What is the policy for changing apartments within the community?
- What utilities are included in the monthly rent?
- Is there an entrance fee or is it month-to-month only?
- Will the community make cosmetic changes to the apartment before move-in?
- What appliances are included?
- Where is the laundry facility?
- What do housekeeping services include and/or exclude?
- How many staff members are on duty at any given time? What are their roles?
- Is there an emergency response system in the community?
- Is there an active resident council? If so, what is the purpose?
- Are religious services offered? Who conducts them and when?
- How long have key management team members been employed there?
- What might make a person ineligible to live there?
- What is the policy on serving alcohol in the common areas of the community?
- Are electric scooters allowed in the building?
- Who manages the community and how active are they in local daily operations?

TIPS FOR TOURING

SKILLED NURSING COMMUNITIES



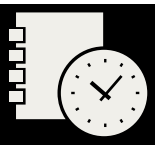
- Visit the community on different days and at various times (including mealtimes).
- Take note of staff morale, resident activities and nursing staff availability.
- Talk to members of the nursing staff about how long they have worked there.
- Ask the nursing community administrators about staff-to-resident levels.
- Obtain a copy of the most recent state survey to learn whether the community has been cited for deficiencies (and what types).
- Ask how often the resident care plan is reviewed and revised. Ask to see a sample of a care plan.
- Contact the local ombudsman organization to ask about issues related to specific long-term care communities.

MAKE NOTE:

- Level of functioning of current residents?
- How are meals served (i.e. restaurant or buffet style)?
- Is the wait staff courteous and tidy?
- Take notice of the attitude and appearance of the staff. Do they seem enthusiastic?
- Is the community well kept? Are there any signs of deferred maintenance?
- Are activity boards posted? Do they include things that may interest you?
- What is the traffic like to and from the community?
- If the community is licensed, be sure to check on its state inspection results.
- Does the community smell nice and appear clean and tidy both inside and out?
- Did the staff members answer your questions knowledgeably and thoroughly?
- Do staff members speak respectfully to residents and colleagues?

NOTES:

MOVING TIMETABLE



◯ Move date is scheduled for: _____ (DAY OF WEEK), _____ (DAY), _____ (MONTH), _____ (YEAR)

◯ REALTOR® : _____ Company: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

◯ Move Manager: _____ Company: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

◯ Estate sale scheduled for: _____ (DAY OF WEEK) _____ (MONTH) _____ (DAY) _____ (YEAR)

Contact person: _____ Phone: _____

◯ Moving company: _____ Contact person: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

◯ Local post office contacted to notify of upcoming move. Change-of-address forms submitted.

Date submitted: _____ Effective date: _____

◯ Companies notified to stop or transfer service.

	DATE SUBMITTED:	EFFECTIVE DATE:
☐ Telephone		
☐ Water & Garbage		
☐ Gas		
☐ Electric		
☐ Cable TV/Internet		
☐ Newspaper Delivery		
☐ Security System		
☐ *Other* _____		

◯ Valuables are stored/packed in a safe place for the move.

They are located: _____

◯ "Last Box" is packed and is located:

_____

Comparison Charts

Senior Living Communities and Neighborhoods

SENIOR LIVING
COMMUNITY COMPARISON

Name			
Location			
Type			
Contact Person			
Contact Phone/Email			
Standard Services			
Optional Services			
Amenities			
Meals and Food Choices			
Cost (per month): ○ Studio ○ 1 Bed ○ 2 Bed ○ Cottage			
Entrance Fee? ○ Yes / No ○ How much?	☐ YES ☐ NO	☐ YES ☐ NO	☐ YES ☐ NO
Refundable? ○ Yes / No ○ How much?	☐ YES ☐ NO	☐ YES ☐ NO	☐ YES ☐ NO
Pets Allowed?	☐ YES ☐ NO	☐ YES ☐ NO	☐ YES ☐ NO
Smoking Allowed?	☐ YES ☐ NO	☐ YES ☐ NO	☐ YES ☐ NO
What I like?			
What I don't like?			

SENIOR LIVING

NEIGHBORHOOD COMPARISON

RESIDENTIAL HOMES, CONDOS, TOWNHOMES, COTTAGES, DUPLEXES

Name			
Location			
Address			
Builder			
Home Sizes			
Price Range			
Price/Sq. Ft.			
Pet restrictions?			
Age restrictions?			
Fees Include			
Accessibility features?			
Maintenance Fee? Yes/ No Amount?	☐ YES ☐ NO _____	☐ YES ☐ NO _____	☐ YES ☐ NO _____
Gated Entry	☐ YES ☐ NO	☐ YES ☐ NO	☐ YES ☐ NO
Activities /Transportation Nearby			
Amenities			
What I like			
What I don't like			



STEP 2

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

The Family Meeting

As you begin to contemplate a move, a family meeting can be a great way to involve adult children, grandchildren, and family friends in the process. Bringing key people in your life together to discuss your plans can be one way to help everyone deal with the emotional challenges involved in a move from a long- established home.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS

- Informing key people about your relocation plans
- Generating ideas and sharing emotions
- Bolstering support during the move for a caregiver or someone with an illness
- Inviting participation in moving tasks
- Reminiscing about memories from the home or the items within it
- Distribution of household items and family heirlooms
- Completion of necessary legal documentation (power of attorney, signatures on deed, etc.)

SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS

- Plans related to an upcoming move (when and where)
- Reasons for the move
- Feelings about the move (both yours and those of family members)
- Participation of family members during the downsizing process
- Distribution of family heirlooms and sentimental items
- Concerns that you or family members may have about the move
- Reminiscing about fun and memorable times in the family home
- Completion of (or sharing location of) legal documents



For families who may be scattered around the country, it's a good idea to plan for a meeting during a holiday or special event, when distant family members will be in town. If it's not possible to have everyone together at one time, try having two meetings and then share information via e- mail or written notes.

Unfortunately, not all families get along well enough to have a productive and amicable family meeting. Under such be beneficial to have a family mediator or a trusted and respected family friend lead the meeting. For those who prefer to not have a family meeting, or who feel they would prefer in writing, a sample letter is provided on the following page as another possible way for you to communicate your wishes to family members and/or close friends.

SAMPLE LETTER

Date:

Dear Family & Friends,

We would like to make everyone aware that we are considering a move. After doing some research, we have identified some communities we believe suit our needs. These communities are listed below in order of our preference:

PLAN A

#1 Community: _____

Address: _____

Floor plan / Apt. Size: _____

#2 Community: _____

Address: _____

Floor plan / Apt. Size: _____

#3 Community: _____

Address: _____

Floor plan / Apt. Size: _____

Our plans are to make this move in the next months/years, and although we are not in need of help with this move right now, we just wanted to keep you informed of our plans. In the unlikely event that our health declines unexpectedly, resulting in the inability to meet criteria for living in one or more of the above locations, we have chosen alternative locations which are listed below:

PLAN B

#4 Community: _____

Address: _____

Floor plan / Apt. Size: _____

#5 Community: _____

Address: _____

Floor plan / Apt. Size: _____

#6 Community: _____

Address: _____

Floor plan / Apt. Size: _____

In order to simplify things for our family, friends, and others involved, we have also made note of some trusted professionals with whom we have consulted regarding a potential move.

Please contact the people below FIRST in the event it becomes necessary for you to handle any of the details of our move on our behalf.

REALTOR®: Phone: _____ _____

Move Manager: Phone: _____ _____

Estate Liquidator: Phone: _____ _____

Mover: Phone: _____ _____

Home Repair Contractor: Phone: _____ _____

Stager: Phone: _____ _____

Home Health: Phone: _____ _____

Bookkeeper: Phone: _____ _____

Attorney: Phone: _____ _____

Financial Advisor:Phone: _____ _____

Physician: Phone: _____ _____

Hospice/Palliative Care:Phone: _____ _____

Other Important Contacts:

Name/Function: _____ Phone: _____

Name/Function: _____ Phone: _____

Name/Function: _____ Phone: _____

We have also made a list of items (see attached) we would like to see distributed to specific people and organizations. Anything not listed is either to be transported to our new location, or to be sold by a professional estate liquidator.

A copy of this letter has been sent to all interested parties in an effort to simplify the process and lighten the load for those who may be called upon to help us in the event of an unexpected move or change in plans. We are handling the details on our own at the current time, and we appreciate your support. As things progress, or change, we will keep you posted.

All our love,

cc:

DISBURSEMENT LIST



ITEM	RECIPIENT	HISTORY
Example: China hutch in Formal DR	Sarah Smith, granddaughter	Belonged to grandmother, Date: 1912

DISBURSEMENT LIST



ITEM	RECIPIENT	HISTORY



STEP 3

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS

Working with professionals

Working with experienced, reliable professionals throughout the entire downsizing process is the surest way to ensure a smooth transition. We have provided tips for helping you interview key people in the downsizing process. If you have chosen a real estate professional specializing in downsizing moves, he or she has likely already assembled a qualified team and can typically assist you with the referral process and/or handle the communications between service providers.

- Real estate agent
- Move Manager
- Mover/Packer
- Estate Liquidator
- Personal Organizer
- Mortgage Lender
- Home Repair Contractor
- Pest Control Specialist
- House Cleaning Services
- Interior Decorator
- Home Inspector
- Attorney
- Financial Planner
- Insurance Agent
- Senior Living Communities
- Title/Escrow Closing Company

Considerations when hiring professionals

- Interview a minimum of two to three people/companies in each field when possible.
- This is not the time when “cheaper is better.” Make your selections based on service, delivery, reputation, references, and their ability to meet your needs.
- While you generally "get what you pay for," fees should be in line with local norms. Highly inflated fees should be questioned and justified by the services offered and/or degree of experience and expertise in moves similar to yours.
- Check references. Ask them, “Would you use their services again. If so, what would you have them do differently?” Pass your findings along to the service provider.



Tips for hiring estate liquidators:

- Read the contract before signing it.
- In order to avoid a conflict of interest, choose a liquidator who doesn't have a resell business.
- Be aware of what is covered by the percentage (fee) they charge.
- Find out if there is an appraiser on staff.

- Is advertising, cleanup, storage, travel time, sales permit, and trash disposal included in the fee?
- Will they consign items of increased value that don’t sell at the estate sale?
- What length of time will they require to set up for the sale?
- Will they offer a private pre-sale for family and close friends if requested?
- Can they arrange for shipment of items out of state? If so, what is the process? Do they
- clean up after the sale? To what degree? How well do they advertise, and what advertising
- sources do they use? How do they staff the sale (number of staff and security)?
- Is there a minimum fee required? If so, how much and when is it collected?

Tips for hiring movers—and questions to ask:

- What does the insurance cover—replacement value or by-the-pound? How much additional insurance is provided for valuables?
- Is there a minimum hourly rate? (Most movers have a 3-4 hour minimum.)
- How many people will be loading and unloading? Are they uniformed staff or contract labor?
- Are they insured and bonded?
- Obtain references for local and interstate movers, whichever is appropriate. Do they offer
- packing and unpacking services? If so, what are the charges? When does the billing time
- begin and end? (Many movers bill portal to portal.) How long have they been in business? Do
- they specialize in senior living/ downsizing moves?



Tips for hiring real estate agents

- Inquire about experience and training in dealing with downsizing moves – these are very different from traditional moves and require knowledge of the detailed timelines and additional steps involved.
- Do they have support staff available to answer calls when they are unavailable.
- Regular follow-up with you and your downsizing team is important. What are their follow-up policies?
- Get a written estimate of fees and expenses for your sale and/or purchase.
- Observe the level of attentiveness and time taken to address your questions and concerns.
- How much experience do they have? Consider how many sales they have successfully completed in addition to years of experience.
- Obtain 3-5 references AND call for information.
- Choose an agent who sells real estate full-time. Some one with with a second job or who sells “on the side” will not likely be available to serve your needs effectively.
- Technology is a reality in today’s real estate world. Whether or not you use email or the Internet, make sure your agent does.

Tips for hiring home repair contractors:

- A license is often required to work on plumbing, electricity, or heating and air conditioning. Be sure to ask for the contractor’s license number.
- Ask for—and then check—customer references.
- Be cautious if a repair person calls you directly without a recommendation from someone you trust.
- Get 2 or more bids for repairs. Make sure bids are detailed and legible.
- Cheaper is not always better—make certain the bid is realistic.
- Arrange to pay for services upon completion of the work.
- Don't pay in advance.
- Get a second opinion or call a trusted friend or professional before contracting for large projects.



Tips for hiring a move manager

Move managers are skilled at managing move-related tasks and/or coordinating the overall relocation project. They can assist with locating, negotiating with, and hiring service providers. Some real estate agents also provide move management services for an additional fee.

How many moves have they personally guided?

What type of training have they had?

Do they work for an established and reputable company with insurance?
Is move management their primary business or is it offered “on the side?”

What experience and knowledge do they have in dealing specifically with downsizing moves?

Do they have a network of reputable providers for the services you need?

How much time do they spend with each client and how is the timeframe determined?

How are the fees established? Do they charge by the hour or the project?

Call two or more references and ask the following suggested questions:

- What went well and what did not go well, if anything?
- What were the benefits of using this particular move manager?
- Would you hire them again?
- Were their services worth the cost?



STEP 4

DEALING WITH A HOUSE FULL OF POSSESSIONS

Sorting 101: To keep... or not to keep

Sorting through household items and a lifetime of memories can be one of the most time-consuming and emotionally difficult tasks associated with any move. Consider hiring a professional move manager who will provide personalized, objective assistance in helping you organize and sort your belongings. They can assist you with decisions about what to keep, what to discard, what to do with the rest.

The objectivity of hired professionals is often preferred over assistance from friends or family who may have emotional attachments to items. If you choose the DIY (Do-it-Yourself) method, however, we have provided you with some helpful tips below.

Consider the following categories when sorting your belongings:

- Necessities — furniture, toiletries, eating utensils, clothing, etc.
- Family heirlooms — jewelry, dishes, furnishings, etc.
- Sentimental items or keepsakes — gifts, photos, souvenirs, etc.
- Disposables — items with no sentimental value and not required for the new residence.
- Charitable donations — musical instruments, craft supplies, books, furniture, etc.
- Trash – if having an estate sale, let the professionals decide what is trash.
- Valuables - marketable items with resale value.

Beginning the "thinning process"

1) Focus begins with the first 3 categories—necessities, family heirlooms, and sentimental items. These will either be packed and moved to your new residence or passed along to family members or friends.



TIP

Use two different color labels to classify the items that will go with you and those that will go to family members.

2) Items classified as family heirlooms can be passed along to appropriate parties or stored in a safe location for later distribution. It is best, however, to have family members come get their items prior to entering into an estate sale contract.



TIP

In the event items cannot be removed in advance, be sure to clearly mark them "not for sale—family will pick up." If you are planning to hold an estate sale, you should specifically exclude these items in the written estate sale contract.

3) Sentimental items should be sorted, prioritized, and then packed for the move, packed for storage, or given to other family members who might appreciate having them.



TIP

Some items should NOT be stored unless done so in a climate/temperature-controlled area.

4) Disposable items are those items which neither you nor other family members will need, want or appreciate. These items will either be donated or placed in a sale.



TIP

No need to organize, sort, or clean these items during your move. The liquidators will take care of emptying cabinets, drawers, garages, storage, buildings, attics, etc. Most prefer that you not try to help them with this task!

5) Items for donations are those which can either be used or resold by a charitable organization. Call early to confirm a pick-up date and time for your donations and have them outside and ready to go.



TIP

Some estate sale companies will handle this task on your behalf after the sale. It applies to items that do not sell and for which you have given them permission to donate. Be sure to get a receipt for tax purposes, or arrange to have the estate sale company do it for you. Professional move managers can assist with donations if you are not having a sale.



Turn those unwanted items into cash

Estate sales are often associated with the sale of a home's contents when the homeowner has passed away. This is actually not the case, as most estate sales occur when the homeowner has moved and is downsizing.

There are many benefits to holding an estate sale. Here are answers to some key questions concerning whether an estate sale may be right for you.

WHAT DO PROFESSIONAL ESTATE SALE COMPANIES DO FOR ME?

Estate sale companies evaluate and set up your items to sell, price them accordingly, monitor the sales and flow of traffic, and sometimes provide security and extra personnel to deter theft during the sale. They arrange for appropriate permits and advertise your sale in advance.

WHAT GOES AND WHAT STAYS?

Estate sale companies will ask you to leave everything you want sold in the estate sale ***exactly where it is***, allowing you to focus on packing and removing just the items you want and need — no sorting, organizing or arranging items you no longer want. For instance, simply leave that 45-piece set of china in the cabinet and the estate sale company will clean it and ensure it's attractively displayed. Most estate sale companies recommend that you not discard any items, allowing them judge what should be thrown away and what can be sold.

HOW ARE MY BELONGINGS PRICED?

Estate sale companies are experienced in pricing items based on current market value. While you may think your great-grandmother's old vase is worthless, an expert will be able to recognize its true and current market value based on marketplace trends. Every company has a different process for pricing items, so it's important to ask about their process before you hire them.

WHY NOT JUST HAVE A GARAGE OR YARD SALE?

If you hold a garage or yard sale, you'll be responsible for organizing, cleaning, pricing, tagging, and disposing of remaining items after the sale. An estate sale company will handle all those details for you, disposing of what didn't sell (providing you either a tax-deductible receipt from charity, or the proceeds from the buy-out). Make sure the contract says they will leave the house "broom- clean" after the sale.



WHAT IF I WANT A SPECIFIC AMOUNT FOR SOME ITEMS?

You can request the estate sale company set a "reserve" on any item. If it does not sell for the minimum amount, you can keep it instead of selling it for less. Be sure this is in your contract!

WHAT DO ESTATE SALE COMPANIES CHARGE?

Estate sale companies generally charge from 35% to 50% commission on the sale's gross proceeds. Additional fees may be charged for transferring items off-site, advertising, or excessive clean-out of debris. When evaluating the fee, remember that these companies are experts in pricing and selling belongings at market value, and buyers at estate sales arrive with different expectations than shoppers at garage sales (usually anticipated to be bargain bazaars). Even with the commission charged, a professional estate sale will almost always net more than a garage sale (and you won't have to do as much work!).

WHAT ARE ESTATE AUCTIONS?

Auctions are similar to estate sales, except items are not priced in advance. Instead, items are strategically positioned and auctioned in an order pre-determined by the auctioneer. The auction itself can often be pre-advertised, held at the home, and completed in a matter of hours. It is the pre-sale preparation that takes the most time. Each item is generally photographed and inventoried in advance.

Sales can also be held on-line. Some companies have proprietary auction websites that are designed to promote items both local and non-locally. This is a great solution for people in gated communities where on-site sales are not permitted or when the items are better suited for non-local buyers. The estate sale company handles payment, shipping, and on-site pickup, as well as emptying the home of any remaining unsold items (if any).



WHAT ARE SOME REASONS AN ESTATE SALE MAY NOT BE AN OPTION?

- Home is located in an area which does not allow sales. Remaining household items are minimal
- and the cost to prepare for a sale exceeds the potential proceeds. The home and/or contents are unclean or in poor condition. Inclement
- weather during the winter in some regions can make a sale unappealing to liquidators. The
- location of the property is rural or parking is a problem. Limited timeframe due to occupancy request of new owner or occupant (as result of
- home sale contract).

WILL I RECEIVE MARKET VALUE FOR MY "STUFF"?

There is a big difference between "market value" and "resale value." Often we expect the price we paid for an item to determine its re-sale value, while in fact, most items depreciate in value.

A 20-year-old refrigerator may not bring $20, if it sells at all. A sleeper sofa might yield an end-of-year tax deduction if donated to charity, whereas the old pot you've been using in your garden for years could sell for $50.

Timing is everything. Trends change with time. Antiques were all the rage at one point, but are no longer valued the same. Mid-century modern pieces may be more appealing to today's customers, but next year it could be something totally different.

Talk to your move manager, estate liquidator, or real estate sales professional with expertise in downsizing and estate liquidation to learn more specific about the current trends and your situation.



STEP 5

CELEBRATING YOUR NEW LIFESTYLE

Adjusting to a New Lifestyle

BE AWARE OF YOUR FEELINGS

Don't be surprised if it takes some time to get accustomed to a new routine, household surroundings, and people. It's important to note that even those who have prepared for retirement for many years, and who executed their plan exactly as they had intended, sometimes have difficulties adjusting to a new way of life. This change can be even more pronounced for those who have to make a move under less than favorable circumstances related to illness, death of a spouse or caregiver, or financial constraints.

EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT

Whether you're moving as a result of a well-executed plan or due to unexpected circumstances, time for adjustment is expected and necessary. Though everyone differs, there are three factors that have been shown to correlate positively with a successful adjustment to a new lifestyle.

- Level of optimism
- Support network
- Level of activity

People who maintain a positive outlook, who reach out to their peers and family for support, and who continue to be active in social, religious, and physical activities are much more likely to experience a shorter and more pleasurable adjustment period than those who are pessimistic, who retreat inwardly, and who discontinue their regular activities.

SOMETIMES WE NEED A LITTLE SUPPORT

Natural changes in the brain's ability to deal with stress may make it advisable to see a doctor for evaluation and possible treatment. Health issues may manifest not only physically, but psychologically and emotionally as well. Listen to your body's signals and take action sooner than later.



Ideas to make adjusting a little easier

Reach out to family, friends and others to share your experience. A key factor in any life change is having a supportive network of people. Identify and keep close contact with those people in your life whom you trust and in whom you can confide. Share with them the joy or sadness you may be experiencing. For many, the moving process begins many months before the actual move. This is the time to begin processing and dealing with the many emotions that are felt in response to the upcoming lifestyle change.

Stay active or get active. If you are fortunate enough to have been involved in a pleasurable hobby, social club, or church, don't quit just because you have made a change in your residence. When moving locally, make prior arrangements to let friends know you will continue to be involved and, if needed, recruit help with transportation. If you have moved to a new city or away from your "old stomping grounds," it is absolutely necessary that you become involved as soon as you get settled. Once the last box is unpacked and you have found a place for your toothbrush, find a new church, a local dance group, a travel club or seek out new activities and become involved in your new community.

Focus on physical activity and good nutrition. It has been scientifically proven that physical exercise (done correctly) reduces stress, increases strength, reduces risk for falls, improves mood and sleep, and is positively correlated to healthy lifestyles. Many senior living communities offer a physical fitness program or transportation to a local fitness center. Make it a point to exercise regularly and visit with your physician about the best program to suit your personal fitness goals. Just as physical activity is important, proper nutrition is what gives us the energy needed to think clearly, heal ourselves, strengthen our bones and muscles, and maintain a positive mental health. You may not feel hungry, but your body needs nourishment, so eat something healthy (even a small snack) throughout the day.



Keep in touch with family and friends. Hang on to your address book and drop a note or email to family and friends from time to time. It is recommended that you take at least an hour a week to maintain contact with the people you care about. This will not only be good for you, it will also be good for them. *Our rule of thumb is that, for every person you lose contact with due to a move, death, or other circumstance, you must meet one new person.*

Educate or get educated! Whether you are a retired college professor or you never completed high school, you can always be an educator to those in your community. Consider the fact that the more you stimulate your brain and use that particular muscle, the more likely you will be to ward off mental decline and mental illness. One way of doing this is to get involved in the school system, Sunday school, or a local Boys and Girls Club.

Not interested in being surrounded by kids? Another way to keep your brain simulated is to go back to school yourself. Enroll in a college course, take an art class, or take up golf or the guitar! Many universities have programs for seniors where classes are offered at no charge. Or, for the really ambitious, how about an advanced degree? Why not?

Explore available resources. If you are finding that you just can't seem to get yourself motivated, you may just lack clarity about what it is you want from this next chapter of your life. That is a very common experience as you make major life changes. This certainly does not mean you are depressed or have a problem! Consider reaching out to a professional life coach or someone who can help you sort through your feelings, your thoughts, and your dreams about what you desire your life to look like.

It all comes back to the familiar saying, "Use it or lose it!"

After a move, especially one that was unexpected, it may be easier to stop being active and let others do things on your behalf. That's great to some degree, because the whole idea behind downsizing was to simplify life, right? So, let others do the tasks that you don't enjoy doing. You can do all the things you enjoy (but didn't have time for previously). You may have lost sight of some of those favorite activities you once enjoyed because your life was revolving around the things you HAD to do. Now is the time to reinvent yourself!

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

QUESTIONS
MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED



Q: How long do people usually "think about it" before moving?

A: Some take longer than others, but our experience has been that people take a minimum of 6-12 months to make a decision about moving. The emotional move takes place in one's mind and this can take several months or even years. Once the emotional move has been made, a physical move can often occur within 30-45 days (or even sooner).

Q: What if my kids live out of state and I need help moving?

A: Hiring a move manager is the ideal solution for people in this situation. If you are unable to find a professional move manager near you, it may be helpful to call on a professional care manager or organizer. Explain what you need, and they will likely assist you for an hourly rate. Your real estate professional specializing in senior moves or downsizin will also be a huge asset in this area.

Q: Where do I start with sorting my possessions?

A: Sorting can seem overwhelming at first glance, so we recommend you begin with one room, closet or dresser. Keep in mind that you are only looking for items that you may be taking with you. If you open a cupboard or closet and say, "I don't want any of that," then leave it alone and move on. A common misconception is that every nook and cranny needs to be gone through. Often, estate sale companies will allow you to take a last minute scan of items you may have overlooked during the move while they are setting up for the sale.

As you sort, segregate items to be moved with you from those to be sold (by leaving the ones to be sold right where they are)! Use sticky notes to label furniture, closets, cabinets, and other areas, "sell," "move," "donate," "family to take," etc.

Q: Doesn't a house show better with furniture?

A: This is a common question asked by people who are trying to decide whether they should move before or after their house sells. Every real estate professional will have an opinion on this matter. Regardless of how the house looks, furnished or unfurnished, there are other more important factors. Safety and convenience are primary considerations and good reasons to go ahead and move prior to placing your home on the market. Time and stress also factor into the decision. When the home sells, there might be as few as three weeks to as many as six weeks to make your move and liquidate the remaining personal property. Trying to manage all the details in a short time frame can be overwhelming, thus moving prior to the sale is preferable.

Q: What do real estate agents charge?

A: Real estate professionals typically charge a commission which is based on a percentage of the home's sales price—usually somewhere between 5% to 7%, with 6% being the most common in most regions. Each associate negotiates a fee based on the services offered and the property being sold. Discount brokers may charge less and leave the showing and contract negotiations to the homeowner. Specialized brokers may charge more and include added-value services in their fee structure. Some companies have "transaction fees" beyond the commission, so be sure to ask in advance about any fees that are not specific.

Q: What do estate sale companies charge for their services?

A: Estate sale companies vary in their fees. Many base their fee on the projected gross sales expected to be collected. For instance, if a car is included in the sale, they may reduce their fee percentage due to the increased proceeds anticipated by selling the car. It may also depend on whether the sale is held on- site (in your home) or if they are required to move your items to another location to sell. The typical fee percentage ranges from 35% to 50%, with more experienced and upscale liquidators often charging more. Some companies charge extra for advertising, while others include this in their commission.

Q: What if I don't have enough stuff for an estate sale?

A: If an estate sale company determines that you have valuable items to sell, but there is insufficient quantity to warrant an individual estate sale, then they may choose to bring in items from another estate to increase the pool of potential buyers. They may also offer to take specific items of yours to be included in another sale. It is sometimes more beneficial to sell the household items to a reseller for a very modest "buy-out" amount or donate them to a charity.

Q: Why should I use a REALTOR with experience working with downsizing and senior living community moves?

A: REALTORS® typically charge a commission which is based on a percentage of the home's sales price—usually 5% to 7%, with 6% being the most common. Each associate negotiates a fee based on the services offered and the property being sold. Discount brokers may charge less and leave the showing and contract negotiations to the homeowner. Specialized brokers may charge more and include added-value services like downsizing assistance or moving expenses in their fee structure.

Q: What if the real estate agent recommends I move before selling, but I need the equity from my home for moving expenses?

A: Many homeowners use the equity in their home to pay for their next house, for a Senior living community entrance fee, and/or for moving expenses. If their move needs to be scheduled prior to closing the sale of their home, temporary financing can be an option. Banks, credit unions, or mortgage lenders can provide loans which allow use of equity in a current home to finance the move to another home or senior living community. Once the home is sold, proceeds from the sale are applied to pay off the loan. Since many senior living communities will "work with" prospective residents when circumstances result in this type of delayed asset transfer, a mortgage loan should be reserved as a last resort for temporary financing.

Q: What if I don't have enough stuff for an estate sale?

A: If an estate sale company determines that you have valuable items to sell, but there is insufficient quantity to warrant an individual estate sale, then they may choose to bring in items from another estate to increase the pool of potential buyers, or to take your things to another site. Another option is, they might wish to take particular items to their gallery for consignment, or ask you to allow them to market your valuables via the Internet. If the remaining items are not antiques or collectibles, it is sometimes more beneficial to allow an auction company to take them to their auction house for a sale, or to offer the item to a dealer for a modest "buy-out" amount.

Q: What if the real estate agent recommends I move before selling, but I need the equity from my home for moving expenses?

A: Many homeowners use the equity in their home to pay for their next house, for entrance fees at some senior living communities, or for moving expenses. If the move needs to be scheduled prior to closing the sale of a home, temporary financing can be one option. Banks, credit unions, or mortgage lenders can provide loans which allow use of equity in a current home to finance the move to another home or senior living community. Once the home is sold, proceeds from the sale are applied to pay off the loan. Since many senior living communities will work with prospective residents when circumstances result in this type of delayed asset transfer, a mortgage loan should be reserved as a last resort for temporary financing.

Q: My house will likely need to have some repairs and/or improvements made before it is sold. Where should I start? (Or, What can I do to ensure I get the most money from the sale of my existing home?)

A: Sometimes, it's advantageous to make needed repairs and home improvements before placing a home on the market. There are multiple issues to consider when making appropriate decisions about what needs to be done and when to do it, and an experienced real estate agent is one of the best resources to guide your decisions. An "as-is" sale is somewhat misleading, since there are often repairs or replacements needed before a sale can be close (to satisfy requirements of mortgage lenders, appraisers, or home inspectors).

Q: How many senior living communities should I visit before I make a decision?

A: To make sure you are choosing from the best available communities, do your homework! While some cities have a number of senior living options, others are limited to fewer choices. If you are fortunate to have located several options, visit those that appear to fit your preferences. Use the survey and checklists in this guide and go comparison-shopping. Visit your top choices more than once, at different times of the day, and remember to review the tips prepared for you here in the guide.

Q: I need to move to assisted living but it is very expensive. Are there any resources to help cover the cost?

A: Assisted living communities provide various levels of care, some of which may be covered by certain long-term care insurance policies. If you have this type of insurance, contact the company in advance and inquire as to whether your policy has an assisted living benefit. Veteran's benefits can also be applied toward assisted living care. Not all assisted living communities are equipped to facilitate the application process or are even familiar with it, so when in doubt or if you need assistance and information, contact local service providers who can help you with the application process. The person who provided you with this guide is likely to know the resources available in your area.

Q: Why should I hire a real estate agent specializing downsizing instead of my friend from church, my previous agent, my daughter's best friend, or my neighbor?

A: This particular move - a downsizing move - is likely unlike any other move you have made in the past. In fact, depending on market and economic circumstances (whether it's a buyer's or seller's market), it is more critical now than ever that you choose a trained agent possessing high-level sales experience, superior knowledge, and excellent negotiation skills. Remember, your downsizing move involves a rather extensive set of unique and often complex components, requiring multiple professionals in various dissimilar disciplines. You will require the best negotiator and people manager available to ensure your transition is as hassle-free and stress-free as possible.

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