



Downsizing Strategies & Quick Tips

1. **Acceptance of change.** The downsizing process can be difficult and will involve emotional aspects such as walks down “Memory Lane” and the physical components of strength and stamina. It will also challenge you to make many decisions.
2. **Division of Assets:** Decide who gets what early on. Put this in writing or tag which pieces are to be distributed to which family member. Do not wait until a week before the move to begin this process. It’s can be stressful as arguments sometimes surface over who gets what.
3. **Clear Out Kid Clutter:** Work with your children to clear out their childhood treasures once and for all. Parents often get stuck with prom dresses, letter jackets, schoolbooks and other mementos when their children fly from the nest. As a result, attics and basements get cluttered with all the left-behind belongings. Well before the move, organize a distribution of these items back to their rightful owners.
4. **Focus on Lesser-used Rooms First:** Begin the downsizing process in rooms not in use or rooms used the least in your loved one’s home. This will keep clutter and piles of unsorted items out of their everyday space and help to keep stress to a minimum.
5. **Make It a Daily Task:** Work in short blocks of time over the course of a few months rather than 10-hour shifts during the week before the move.
6. **Start Big:** With each room, start sorting the biggest items first. Not only will this get bigger items out of the way more quickly, you will also feel like progress is being made sooner than if you start with smaller pieces.

“Stop Running in Circles—Get All Squared Away!”

7. **D.O.T.S: Establish a Sorting System:** Before digging into bins, boxes and closets come up with a system by which to sort. Designate areas in each room for items to be kept, tossed, donated and passed on. Then begin the downsizing derby.

D- Donate

O- Organize/Pack

T- Trash!

S- Sell or Giveaway

8. **Don't Bury (or Throw Out) Treasures:** In the haste to downsize, valuable items — both financially and sentimentally — can be lost, tossed or hidden away in the bottom of a box. Be sure to set special pieces aside in a safe place so they don't inadvertently get thrown in the trash or into a box marked for donation. Also mark all boxes with their specific contents and where they are to go – towels to the new bathroom, pots and pans for the new kitchen, etc. This will make it much easier to find something and to get the items to their new location.

9. **Slow and Steady Wins the Race:** It has taken years to accumulate all of your precious things. Taking time to properly sort, emotionally detach and pare down is crucial to both the process and to your wellbeing.

10. **When in Doubt, Hire Out:** If the downsizing process ends up being too much for you there is help. Professional organizers and senior move managers can assist in paring down. Visit the National Association of Senior Move Manager's (NASMM) website or the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO), www.napo.org, to learn more.

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Past-Present-Future

Strategy by Judith Kohlberg

When making decisions, where are you getting stuck? Learn to categorize your items in one of the three ways. Here are some examples.

Past—*The person you used to be.* Old photos, memorabilia, “past lives,” outdated items, clothing that is too big/too small, items you’ve held onto because they belonged to someone else, etc...

Present—*The person you are today.* The bill that needs to be paid, keys to your house, current technology, clothes that fit today, anything you are currently using with regularity.

Past—*The person you hope to become.* Recipes you would like to cook, travel brochures for a trip you want to take, supplies for projects, gifts to give, etc... Things you are planning to use as soon as you find the time.

Helpful downsizing questions to ask yourself:

1. Does this items add value to my life?
2. Do I need it?
3. Do I want it?
4. Do I love it?
5. Do I have room for it in my life or new space?

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