

## Surviving Moving Day without a headache

Let's face it — moving is a task we all love to hate. It's time consuming, tiring and tedious.

However, by planning ahead and taking your move one step at a time, it can be a lot less of a hassle and you may even have some fun. After all, it marks a new beginning and if it's done properly it can be quite an exciting experience.

### Start Planning Early

Procrastinators beware — the key to a stress-free move is to start planning as soon as you know your moving date. There are several tasks you can work on such as taking an inventory of your possessions. Divide this list into three categories: things you will be taking to your new home, things you will put into storage and things you will sell or give away. In an ideal world, the most stress-free move would be one where movers arrive, pack all your belongings and move them to your new home. Unfortunately, hiring helpers is a costly endeavour, so it's something most of us can only dream about. For example, packing can cost between \$10 to \$50 per box, depending on the box size. Some companies charge by the hour. It usually takes about 10 hours to pack the contents of a two-bedroom home at a cost of between \$40 to \$70 per hour.

The actual move costs between \$65 to \$100 per hour and takes approximately eight hours for a two-bedroom home. Most moving companies also charge an additional hour for travelling time if you're moving within a city.

If you plan to pack your own belongings and then hire movers just to transport the goods, ask friends and family for recommendations to make sure you hire a reliable moving company.

Book the movers as soon as possible and schedule the move for early in the morning. If you schedule it for later in the day, you run the risk of the movers arriving late due to earlier moves that took longer than expected. Many moving companies will also give you a lower rate if you move at an off time that is not at the end of the month.

### Truck Rental

If you plan to handle the whole move on your own, but need to rent a moving truck, make sure you complete this task as early as possible. You should also ensure that you or another member of your family is familiar with operating a truck. It's important to thoroughly read over the rental agreement and confirm that you are adequately insured as well.

When selecting a truck, make sure it's comfortable, safe and easy-to-use. Power steering is a definite bonus and extra-long loading ramps also come in handy since they can be positioned for easy loading angles.

Collecting boxes is another task you can get out of the way well in advance of your move. Stop by supermarkets or check your place of work for discarded boxes.

Moving and truck rental com-

panies also sell boxes. Make sure you have lots of them, so you don't run out and have to over-stuff them. Heavy, bulky boxes can create unnecessary headaches on moving day.

You should also stock up on newspapers, tape, bubble wrap and markers. It's imperative that you clearly label the contents of each box.

It's also a good idea to write on the box which room it belongs to. This is particularly helpful if movers will be transporting the goods for you.

### Change of Address

Notifying friends, family and appropriate organizations of your change of address is another task you can take care of before your move.

Some organizations you should contact include the post office, financial institutions, insurance companies and distributors of magazines and periodicals. Don't forget to get your driver's licence updated with your new address after you have completed your move.

You should begin packing at least two weeks before the move. Start by packing things you won't need such as books, knick-knacks and out-of-season clothes. Make sure you write "fragile" on boxes which need to be handled with care.

Whenever possible, pack small appliances in their factory boxes. If you have to disassemble furniture, use sandwich bags to keep the screws separate and use labels to identify the furniture they belong to.

Clothing is always a nuisance to move, especially if you're a "shopaholic" and have several closets full of clothing.

Instead of taking everything off hangers and packing them in boxes or suitcases, try using garbage bags as garment bags to cover several hangers of clothes. Tie them shut with twist ties so the clothes won't get dirty. Since the clothes are still on hangers, you can transfer them directly to your new closets.

Leave small garments in bureau drawers. If there is extra room in the drawers, fill them with small fragile items. Cover the drawers with a towel or blanket then tie them with rope. Avoid using tape since it can ruin the finish of the furniture.

Wrap all dishes, glassware and kitchenware separately in bubble wrap or newspaper. To avoid dishwashing when you unpack, put each piece in a plastic bag before wrapping with paper.

### Final Details

As the moving date approaches, make sure you have arranged for final readings of your water, hydro and gas meters and don't forget to get your phone disconnected. Also, make sure cable, gas, phone and other utilities are hooked up in time for when you arrive at your new home.

On the moving day, keep all valuables, medication and important documents with you. If you're moving in the winter, protect mattresses and couches with old sheets, plastic or furniture covers.

### A few tips

## Increasing your kitchen space

It is a common fact that in most homes, the kitchen is the centre of attention.

Although the living room or family room is usually the most comfortable, the kitchen has always been the traditional spot for members of the family to gather. It is another well-known fact that there is never enough space in this particular room of the house, no matter how large, it may be.

There are a few things you can keep in mind to maximize kitchen space. Some require remodeling while some can be put into practice at any time.

### Out of the way

First of all, bulky appliances like electric mixers, blenders and food processors should not be kept on the counter where they take up valuable space and make the kitchen look cluttered.

An appliance garage (which is really just extended cupboard space large enough for small appliances), with a roll-down panel or hinged doors keeps them neatly tucked away when they are not in use. Electrical outlets can be included in this space,

so the appliances can be used where they sit.

If you are having your cabinets redone, a "lazy-susan" is a great way to conserve space.

It is especially handy for rounded bottles and tall, circular containers that take up a lot of room. These fit into the corners of your bottom cabinets where you would normally have to really reach at things.

### Centre Island

A centre island provides additional counter space, which is especially useful if your large appliances take up a great deal of your present space. Additional burners and sinks can even be added here or you may wish to put stools around the island to eliminate the need for a kitchen table.

Wire racks on doors and walls can add space efficiently to any pantry, while sliding bins make good dividers in deep drawers.

Organizational items like these mean you don't have to go digging for whatever it is you need.

Simple tricks like these work wonders and add value to any home.

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