

Plan ahead for your moving day

If you're in the midst of planning a move to a new home and you're like most people, you're probably beginning to feel a little overwhelmed.

By carefully planning your move well in advance of moving day, you can help ease the transition and make sure the event is as smooth and stress-free as possible.

To save both you and your family from frazzled nerves and countless arguments, take the time now to chart out every aspect of your move. Obviously, if you're moving across town, you have a little more flexibility; you can always make several trips back and forth from your current home to your new one, taking odds and ends in loose bags and containers.

But if you're planning to relocate to a different city many miles away, your move will require a little more organization.

Where to Start

It's a good idea to start by taking an inventory of everything you own so you can decide between the items you want to take and those that you no longer need or want. You might even want to store some items in a storage facility if you plan to do some immediate cosmetic or structural improvements as soon as you move in to your new home (like painting, floor refinishing, and so on).

You may also want to consider disposing of some items through a garage sale or through donations to charitable groups.

Also be sure to book a moving company — or reserve a rental truck if you're handling the move yourself. This should be done well in advance of your move — at least a month — to ensure that everything is in place for the big day.

Stock Up on Packing Items

It's a good idea to stock up on cardboard boxes and newspapers well in advance of your move. Boxes can usually be obtained from grocery stores. You might be able to get better quality used boxes from your place of work. You can also try asking your moving company to see if they have any for sale. When collecting used boxes, check the corners and sides for wear.

Pack in Advance

Start packing well in advance of your move. It's a good idea to pack up as many things that

you don't use very often first. You won't miss them, and as moving day draws nearer, you'll only have to worry about essential items.

You may want to pack room by room, or pack items that are alike together — like all your books — or all your knickknacks and collectibles. To make the best use of space, and keep things from moving around too much during transport, you can use sheets and towels to cushion large fragile items like lamps, or pictures.

Large items of furniture — like dressers — should be used as effectively as possible during the move. You can pack small things in the drawers — but nothing heavy.

Valuable Items and Papers

Plan to keep all your valuables (like jewelry) and any special heirlooms (family portraits and keepsakes, etc.) with you during the move, along with any medications and important documents. You may want to pack all these things into a small suitcase or bag for easy access.

It's a good idea to cover up mattresses and couches thoroughly with old sheets, large pieces of plastic or special furniture covers to keep them from getting dirty or damp during the move — particularly if you're moving during the winter months. To keep them secure, pin sheets to the edges of mattresses and sofas. You can also ask your moving company if they have special covers.

You may also want to put protective covers on pieces of wooden furniture. Again, ask your moving company.

Other Things to Keep in Mind

It's a good idea to make a list of all the things that need to be done closer to your actual moving date — like arranging for a final reading of your water and hydro meters and having your phone disconnected. You should also arrange a date to have everything hooked up (cable, gas, phone, utilities) and ready to go at your new home.

Also be sure to fill out change of address cards before your move to make sure all your mail is re-routed to you. And don't forget to notify banks and insurance companies of your new address. Make sure you remember to get your driver's license updated with your new address once the move is complete.

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