



Downsizing Tips for Seniors

Most seniors downsize when they move. Downsizing can be difficult. During this difficult time it helps to focus on the things in your home that you love. Keep saying, "I'll take what I love." Take what has meaning for you, even if you haven't used it in a while. Surrounding yourself with the things you love will help you feel more at home when you move. Below are some more tips on how the journey through the difficulties of downsizing.

Most seniors fret and lose sleep in the weeks and days prior to the move. Reduce the amount of time that you are in clutter and chaos and keep your current home as ordered and organized as you can for as long as you can. Leave things in place that you will not be moving until after you move.

Remember the 80/20 rule. Most people only use 20% of what they have. The other 80% is taking up space you will no longer have.

It helps to mark large items like furniture, mirrors, artwork and lamps. Use colour coded stickers – like green for "keepers." These stickers will let you see how much you are planning to take. You can always change your mind later by just adding or removing a sticker. **Make sure the stickers you buy are removable.

Once you've marked the furniture you want to keep, create a floor plan drawn to scale and mark the measurements of your furniture on it. This will help you see exactly what will fit. On moving day, the movers work quickly. "Where does this go?" is the constant question as they unload the truck; it's very confusing if you don't have a plan.

Assemble smaller collectibles in one area. Choose a table or corner in your living room where you can place mementos and collectibles. Don't pack them at this point ... you'll forget what is in the boxes, and you might underestimate how much you're taking.

If you have large collections - jigsaw puzzles, books, DVD's, CD's - set a limit (say one-quarter), choose your favourites, and donate or sell the rest. Your storage space will be limited so keep asking yourself "Is there room for this ??"

Make sure you have storage and display space for items you are keeping. Small, narrow display shelves that hang on the wall are a good option for family photos and small collectibles that may now be on a fireplace mantel. For mementos and old family

photos consider specially designed under-the-bed storage boxes to hold items you rarely use.

Once you've sorted your major possessions, you can start on the kitchen cupboards. You may no longer be entertaining or hosting large gatherings so choose accordingly. When you have finished one cupboard, you can pack those; you can use what you're not taking as spares until you move.

Be realistic when sorting through your clothes closets. Get rid of things you haven't worn in a year, things that don't fit or need repair. Once you've sorted and discarded items, you can leave your clothes in the drawers for moving. You can use the extra drawer space for storing other things, like photographs.

Get someone to help you sort; it is easier to let go if someone else is holding the item and seeing it objectively with you. Take your time; work room by room in short spurts. Moving is stressful, and when you get tired, it becomes more difficult to decide.

The 10 Moving Truths

☞ Moving is the least painful when the person moving sees a benefit to moving: focus on the gain, not on the loss.

☞ Moving is a huge change: Adaptation to change is in direct proportion to the feeling of control that the person has over the change.

☞ Most people want familiarity in the new place: it needs to look and feel like the home they left.

☞ Everybody thinks they have a lot of stuff...except the people who really have a lot of stuff.

☞ Everybody saves something that to other people seems useless, unnecessary, etc.

☞ Senior men who are downsizing have different and greater challenges than women: they usually aren't involved in hobbies and activities that easily move to smaller places, like sewing, knitting and cooking. Men are more often vested in the workroom, the garage and the completed projects around the house and garden. It's harder for them to take what they love.

☞ Most seniors' children don't want their parents' stuff. (And their kids won't want their stuff, either.)

☞ Most seniors don't have enough in their home for an estate sale after they move.

☞ If you've lived in one house for a long time, you will probably need one dumpster for every 15 years that you've lived in the home. Maybe more.