

Senior Moving Checklist

6 Months Before the Move

Moving under any circumstances can be stressful, but for seniors, there are quite a few additional challenges to overcome and factors to consider. Use this checklist to guide your moving process, and to help alleviate some of the stress during this transition.

If you're thinking about moving, here's where to start.

Decide Where to Move:

If you haven't yet come to a firm decision, it's important to establish where exactly you will be moving. You should base this on your physical needs (both current and future), wants (such as amenities, size, etc.), and what you can afford. Examples include senior living communities, downsizing (buying a smaller home), or moving into a rental home or apartment.

Make Arrangements to Get Help Packing:

Many people spend a lot of time thinking about how their objects will be moved, but not enough time planning the actual packing. It's very common for older adults to be downsizing, and so the packing process isn't just about putting your items in boxes, but also about deciding what you will keep and what you won't. A Senior Move Manager is a great option for those who don't have a lot of family or friends readily available to help.

Schedule Your Move with a Moving Company / Your Moving Team:

It's very easy to underestimate how much stuff you have to move, and how much work it will actually take to move it. For seniors, it's very important to plan for adequate help – especially if you are moving out of town or even out of state. If you have a lot of family that can help, and you aren't moving far, you may be able to rely on them. Otherwise, you should consider hiring a moving company.

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Proper planning during packing is extremely important – it can make all the difference in the world, both when you're moving, and especially when it comes time to unpack.

Make a List of What Furniture You Will Be Bringing with You:

If you are downsizing (most common), you will need to carefully consider where you are moving and how much space you will have. Remember that these large items take up the most space and add the most cost to the actual moving, so depending on your situation, it could make more sense to sell it in advance than bring it with you.

Go Through Every Room in Your House & Purge All Unwanted Items:

This can be an especially painful process, but the more items you get rid of now, the easier it will be to pack and make decisions about what to keep later. Make sure this is a thorough process! Go through your clothes, your old boxes in the attic – everything.

Determine What You Will Not Have Space to Keep or Bring:

Compare the size of your current home, and compare it to the size of the space you are moving, and think realistically about what you will have space to keep. You may have limited storage space in comparison with your new home, so if you don't have space or need to actually use the items, then you may want to consider donating or selling them instead of trying to store them. This is especially true if you are moving to an apartment, condo, or Senior Living Community.

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Donate or Sell the Items You Won't Be Taking with You:

The sooner you can start donating or selling your items, the easier it will be to pack, and the less stressful it will be down the road. If there are certain heirlooms that you can't bear to part with, but don't have space to keep - consider if someone else in your family may want them.

Purchase Boxes and Get Started Early:

If you and your moving team (family/friends) are doing this yourself, you should start packing non-essentials as soon as possible. So start purchasing as soon as you can. You may need to do this in several rounds - you typically will need more boxes than you think. You should consider getting specialty boxes of all shapes and sizes as this will help to keep your items safe, and make the packing process easier.

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Properly Mark Your Boxes As You Pack:

The two most crucial pieces of information to put on your boxes are a broad inventory of what's in the box (try to pack like things together!) and where this box should go in your new home when unloading. Thinking ahead here will save you a lot of time and energy later. For instance, if it's your clothes – then you should label appropriately, and put “Master Bedroom” on the box.

(Optional) Consider Buying Moving Insurance:

This can be valuable for those who have a lot of high-value possessions, or simply want extra peace of mind during the move. Most moving companies will offer several different types of moving insurance. Keep in mind, they may be required by the government to offer some type of compensation for any damages during the move, so make sure you consider your options and do research beforehand – it may even be worth it to consider third-party moving insurance, as it could be a better value.

(Optional) Make a Moving Inventory:

If you're using a moving company, creating a moving inventory is very important in case anything goes missing or is damaged during the move. While not everyone has the time to create an ultra-detailed inventory of every item they are moving, it is important to at least properly document the condition (including taking photos) of your more valuable items, such as furniture, heirlooms, artwork, etc.

Finish Your Last-Minute Packing Several Days Before Your Move:

In order to make your moving day as stress-free as possible, aim to finish all that last-minute packing a couple of days before you actually move. The last thing you want is to have your moving team show up, and you're still furiously packing boxes – this creates more stress for everyone involved.

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During & After the Move

While preparation is the key to a smooth and relatively stressless move, there are some additional steps to make your actual move experience (and the aftermath) as easy as possible.

Designate a Moving Director:

When it comes time to unload your items into your new residence, ensure that there is one person who is responsible for ensuring that all the boxes and furniture are put in the correct places, according to the plan that you (hopefully) came up with ahead of time.

Finish Unpacking All of Your Boxes:

While this might seem like an obvious step, there can be a temptation to leave some boxes unpacked while you settle into your new home. Since no packing job is perfect, this can cause more stress and frustration when you can't find certain items when you need them. If there are items that need to be stored, it would be best to still unpack them and put them into more permanent storage bins as soon as possible.

(Optional) Inspect Your Items for Damage:

If you used a moving company, you should carefully examine all of the items that you inventoried. In the event that anything was damaged, the sooner you file a claim, the more likely you are to actually get reimbursed.