

Retirement Living Downsizing 101.

*A guide to help you navigate
the move to retirement living.*



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Eventually, we all have to downsize, but that doesn't mean it has to be a downer.

With some preparation, and a little self-knowledge, it can be easier than you think. Here are some tips to help you prepare to move into a retirement community.

Start long before you need to move

If you are thinking of moving into a retirement community in the next year, start early by going through your things while you're feeling healthy and in the mood.

Start small

Pick a small area, like a closet, bathroom or laundry room. The less emotional attachment an area has, the faster you'll move through it. After you start, stick just to that area. Don't get distracted and start in another room before you finish.



Pack for keeps.

It's important to pack the things you want to take with you to your new home. Never make a "maybe" pile, because it'll grow the fastest. If you haven't used it in a year, throw it out or donate it. There's no point in hauling it with you if it'll just sit on the shelf in your new retirement living suite.

Be realistic.

Pace yourself and take breaks. Acknowledge beforehand that some rooms, like attics/garages or basements, will take longer. Rooms where boxes of hobbies, holiday decorations, old photo albums and other items that you may want to linger over will slow you down.



Consider your new space and eliminate accordingly.

Know the measurements and layout. If you won't have an office in your new retirement suite, you probably don't need a desk. After you tackle your small spaces, consider sorting rooms that won't exist in a condominium or retirement living suite. Things in these rooms will need to migrate to other rooms or be donated or sold.

Toss the spares.

Five spatulas in different colours are fine when you have a huge kitchen, but consider what you really need, and donate those other four.



Create memory books with pictures of mementos or collections.

With less wall space, make a book with high resolution photos of treasured homemade holiday decorations or grandkids' art. There are many online photobook services to help streamline this process.

Consider passing along family heirlooms and other legacies early.

You'll reap the twin benefits of making room and seeing the reaction. This also give you chance to tell the story behind that watch or antique table, so the receiver knows why it's important to you and the family.

and finally...



Consider Getting Help!

Remember, downsizing is tough, especially if you haven't moved in years. Don't be afraid to bring in help. Family members, friends, or a even professional downsizing company can help you sort and pack – and gently remind you that you only need one spatula!

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