

# Tips for Downsizing

**Thinking of downsizing?** Downsizing involves moving from a larger space to a smaller, potentially less expensive one. You might choose to downsize for any number of reasons from saving money to meeting accessibility and care needs or even moving closer to friends and family. Whatever the reason, downsizing and decluttering can make life easier and safer. Still, scaling back on your possessions to fit your new home can be emotional and stressful, especially if you've lived in one place for a while. **Here are some tips to make the process more manageable:**

## START PLANNING EARLY

Give yourself enough time to make a plan about where you might relocate and what needs you will have in your new space. Consider the cost of living, healthcare expenses, lifestyle, weather, activities in the area, and what kind of housing you might move into. You might have different needs moving to a house with a yard in a colder climate than an apartment-style independent living facility somewhere warm. Define clear goals for yourself and your move.

## MEASURE YOUR NEW LIVING SPACE

It is important to understand the dimensions of your new living space. The number and size of your new rooms can help you decide how much you need to downsize and which of your belongings will comfortably fit in your new home.

## GO ROOM BY ROOM

Tackle one room at a time. If you have a room in your current home that your new place does not have, save it for last and only bring the essentials. Try to keep only one of each category except clothing.



## ORGANIZE YOUR BELONGINGS

Categorize your things into **Keep**, **Toss**, and **Give Away**. Try to keep **Maybes** to a minimum. Identify items that won't be needed in your new home or lifestyle. Think about how often you use items or your emotional attachment to them. When in doubt, ask yourself questions to pinpoint what you value: Have I used this in the last 6 months? Does this spark joy or have personal value? Start small and save the big, emotional items for later to get in the rhythm of downsizing and decluttering.

**Keep** both useful items and items with sentimental value. Try to limit collections that can take up a lot of space. One option might be to digitize important or sentimental documents like photos, letters, and artwork that way you can keep them without taking up too much space.

**Toss** broken items and sell unneeded valuable items on platforms like Facebook Marketplace, eBay, or Craigslist.

**Give away** gifts to loved ones and donate items you choose not to sell. Consider donating to LGBTQ+ history projects, community centers, or groups.

## LABEL YOUR BOXES

When you're ready to pack things up, organize boxes by room or area in your home with the number of boxes that belong in each space. An example label might be "Kitchen - Daily plates and bowls. Box 1 of 5." This will help you keep track of your belongings and make unpacking easier.

## GET SUPPORT

Invite trusted friends and family to help you downsize and enjoy the memories associated with your belongings. Focus on what you are gaining and how your life will improve with these changes. You can also hire real estate agents, moving services and downsizing services that specialize in helping older adults with the downsizing process. If you do not want to reveal aspects of your identity, you might want to pack away personal items and documents like letters, photos, journals, or other personal effects yourself before bringing others into the process.