

TRANSITIONING TO SENIOR LIVING: FOUR STEPS TO STRESS-FREE DOWNSIZING

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Transitioning to a senior living community is an exciting time filled with new opportunities to engage in activities and build relationships. One of the first steps on the journey will be downsizing your current home and belongings.

While the idea of moving into a smaller space may feel overwhelming, rest assured that once you are at your new community you will feel like you have upsized your living space with all the amenities senior living offers. And having the right guidance can make all the difference in making the transition a smooth one. Here are four tips to stress-free downsizing:

STEP 1: KNOW YOUR NEW SPACE

Deciding what to keep is easier when you have a clear picture of your new space. Before making any decisions about your belongings, visit the community (or ask a family member to do so) and assess the layout of your future residence. Be sure to:

- Take room-by-room measurements.
- Identify built-in storage space.
- Picture where your furniture will go.

STEP 2: GET THINGS ORGANIZED

Like many long-time homeowners, you have probably accumulated a lot of stuff over time. While the idea of getting rid of possessions might be stressful, sorting and organizing things can be a liberating experience. Give yourself plenty of time and keep the following in mind:

- Create an inventory of everything, including furniture, appliances and clothes.
- Classify and tag items into three categories -

Sell, Donate and Keep.

- Prioritize items with sentimental value.
- Be realistic about what will fit and provide value in your new space.

STEP 3: SAFEGUARD YOUR NECESSITIES

In preparation for your move, carefully store and label the items in the "Keep" category. Remember to:

- Set aside any essentials you'll need for the first few days in your new residence.
- Pack belongings by room or function to simplify the unpacking process. Be sure to protect any fragile or expensive objects.
- There are compassionate and helpful moving organizations to help you pack and move. Ask a senior living professional for a reference!

STEP 4: DONATE OR SELL WHAT YOU DON'T NEED

Once you've decided what to keep, you'll need a plan for the rest:

- If you choose to donate, research local charities or nonprofit organizations, and ensure your donations are clean and in working condition.
- For items you want to sell, consider hosting a garage or tag sale, or utilizing online resources like eBay, Facebook Marketplace or Craigslist. For high-value items, speak with an estate sale expert or an auctioneer.

Remember, every journey starts with a single step, so don't be afraid to start small. You'll soon see results, which will help you feel great about your upcoming move.

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