

MOVING INTO YOUR NEW HOME

Your final destination

Even the most well-ordered household gets turned upside down during a move; getting organized is the first order of business. One room at a time, sort every item into one of three categories: either Pitch It, Give It Away or Keep It.

Everything in the first group can go straight into the trash. Be ruthless! Extra weight means extra money if you're hiring a moving company; if you move on your own, ask yourself whether an item is worth packing, lugging and unpacking. Your move is an opportunity to start fresh. Purge your files. Trash soiled or frayed linens—or better yet, put them to one last use as padding in boxes of breakable items. Ask yourself whether you've used each non-seasonal item in the last six months. If so, keep it. Seasonal items like holiday decorations and lawn and garden tools earn a place in your new home if they've been used once in the last year.

Give away or sell things that still have some wear. Take a look at each object's condition, and package up what can go to the charity of your choice. Donations are often tax-deductible; ask for a receipt when you make a drop-off. Alternatively, holding a yard sale before your move will lighten your load and earn you a few extra dollars.

Once a room is cleared of clutter and unused belongings, you're ready to pack. Boxes of appropriate sizes and strengths are available from the folks at your moving company, who, of course, will be pleased to pack everything in your home if you choose. Some companies allow you to pack all of your belongings, while others will pack only china, glassware and

other special-attention objects for you. Pack boxes according to rooms and label them clearly so your movers can deliver each box to the correct place.

To keep track of all the details, create a time line. Web sites such as moving.com include tips and thorough time lines for the countdown to moving day. Some will even record your moving date and e-mail you a weekly to-do list.

Do your homework


Moving requires not only skillful organization, but also thorough research. Knowing what to look for in a mover can save you time and money. Once you've established a moving date, compare notes on moving companies and book one by four to six weeks before that date. You'll find if you dig deep enough that not all movers are created equal, and you get what you pay for.

Carefully review the rates and services provided by a few different companies. All moving companies' services used to be the same; prices were the only distinguishing feature. Stiffening industry competition has forced many movers to offer a variety of service packages. Prices for services vary, but all are substantial enough to merit some planning.

A full-service move from New York to California for a seven- to nine-room house will cost approximately \$8,000 to \$12,500. That said, packing and loading everything yourself (many movers offer these options) will save you about \$4,000 to \$5,500. Are you feeling up to renting a van and driving it

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cross-country on your own? The cost varies according to the size of the van; if you're moving a seven-room house, for example, plan on an overall cost of between \$2,000 and \$4,000, not to mention the physical stress of packing and moving.

Doing more of the work yourself can save you money, but weigh this against the fact that movers are professionals, trained to safely transport your precious possessions. Some companies won't take responsibility for boxes that haven't been packed by their employees or that are poorly packed.

Besides evaluating each moving company's services, it's a good idea to research their track records. If you're unfamiliar with a company you're considering, make sure the U.S. Department of Transportation has issued the company a certificate of authority to move household goods through all applicable states. Your local Chamber of Commerce and the Better Business Bureau are both good sources to learn whether complaints have been filed against a company.

Most moving companies provide liability protection or depreciated coverage, but finding a mover with insurance is rare. Meet with your insurance agent to see whether your current insurance plan covers your move, and consider buying additional, temporary coverage.

Research can save you money on movers, and it also pays off come tax day: Many moving expenses are tax-deductible. Contact the IRS to obtain the necessary forms and to learn which receipts are important to keep. Create a portable file

MOVING—WITH CHILDREN

Time-tested parents offer these tips for moving your youngsters from point A to point B.

- Tell your children as soon as possible about where your family will be moving. Take them to see the house, or show them their new rooms on the blueprints. This will give them much-needed time to adjust.
- Put them to work. Ask your children to take responsibility for packing their toys and books (heavy items on the bottom!). Older children can help plan the garage sale and research your new community. Assigning your kids jobs will give them a sense of ownership in the project.
- Let them say goodbye. Host a going-away party so your children may see their friends one last time and exchange addresses.
- Make it fun. If a long drive lies ahead of your family during the move, plan fun, short side trips along the way, to break the monotony and heighten the sense of adventure.
- Know thyself—and thy children. You know best whether to hire a sitter for moving day or whether your kids will be good helpers. Plan accordingly.

especially for moving-related items: store receipts, business cards and important papers, such as contracts. Become best friends with organization and thorough research, and moving into your new home will be a breeze. 🏠

Resources: www.moving.com