

DOWNSIZING GUIDE

I. Set a Goal

Moving? Not sure? Staying put?

- Know why you're downsizing before you start. Keeping that in mind can help keep you motivated!
- If you're moving, and you know where you're going, you can measure, measure, measure. If it won't fit, get rid of it!

II. Create a Timeframe

If you're moving, you probably have a deadline.

- Ideally, start 3-6 months (or up to a year) before a move.
- Your goal: know what's going and what's staying before movers come to estimate - you don't want to pay for more service than you'll actually need.

III. Have a Method

Whether you're moving or just decluttering your current space, have a method. Here's ours!

- **Schedule sorting sessions daily.** No more than two hours a day. Concentration lags after that.
- **Work for a week or two by yourself,** then you can see if you'll need help.
- **Downsize by category** - purely functional items first, because they're easiest, and that's usually clothing. Keep in mind that downsizing is not a honed skill for most of us. If you start with the easy stuff, you'll build competence and confidence.
- **Measure the space.** The exception to starting with the easiest, most purely functional category is that if you are moving and you know where, start with the furniture, instead.
 1. Measure the new space and then your furniture. When you know what will fit and what needs to go, then you'll know how much storage (and display space) you'll have in (and on) your furniture in the new space.
 2. Measure closets and cabinets in your new space. Compare to what you currently have.



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Knowing which furniture moves and how much storage you will have will inform the downsizing of other categories in your home.

- **Don't jump around.** Finish one category before going on to another one, and don't leave the area during a session to put things away or do other chores. Turn off the phone!

- **Make three piles as you work:**

1. **Keep**, probably or definitely.
2. **Distribute** - give/sell/donate.
3. **Trash**

- **Don't spend time on distribution of your items until you're through sorting** a category or, even better, until you're through with your entire downsizing project. Distribution decisions distract from the more important work: deciding what YOU want and need.

- **Deciding what to keep:**

1. Functional items

- a. Group similar items:

If you have more than one of an item, keep only the best and get rid of the others

- b. Replacement test:

If rarely or never used, could it be easily/inexpensively replaced? If so, Get rid of it.

- c. One year rule:

If you haven't used it in 1 year, it's out.

2. Aesthetic/sentimental items

- a. Keep it if you love it.
 - b. Keep it if it makes you smile.
 - c. Don't keep it out of guilt or obligation.

- **Pictures and Scrapbooks**

Place most pictures/scrapbooks automatically in the keep pile. If you insist on downsizing your photo/scrapbook collection, make it your very last downsizing project.

IV. If you can't get your downsizing done before putting your home on the market:

- Leave kitchen cabinet contents, office area and garage for last. These can be fairly easily camouflaged/ignored for showings or an open house.
- Concentrate on eliminating piles, excessive displays/accessories, excessive furnishings, and general clutter. These are all distracting to buyers, and make your space look smaller than it is.