

The Gurus' Ultimate Packing and Moving Checklist (Long Version)

Two Months Before Your Move:

- Prepare a Budget
Create a moving budget spreadsheet to track expenses.
- Book a Mover
Secure a quote early to increase your chances of getting your preferred moving date.
- Confirm Insurance Coverage
Verify that your movers have adequate insurance.
- Request Time Off for Moving Day
Notify your employer that you need the day off to supervise the move.
- Contact Your Child's School
Ensure that your child is registered and has a start date at their new school.
- Plan for Special Items
Develop a moving plan for special items such as fragile belongings, pianos, or hot tubs.
- Inventory Your Valuables
Start a detailed inventory of your valuables.
- Declutter Your Closet
Turn hangers backward in your closet. After a month, donate any items still on backward hangers.

One Month Before Your Move

- Organize School Records
Contact your children's current school to arrange the transfer of their records to their new school district.
- Use It or Lose It
Begin using up items you don't want to move, like frozen or perishable foods and cleaning supplies. Consider donating excess items to charities such as Goodwill or Salvation Army. Donate large furniture items to Habitat for Humanity or a consignment shop. The more you get rid of, the cheaper and easier your move will be.

Take Measurements

Measure the dimensions of your new place, if possible, to ensure that larger furniture will fit through the doorways and in the rooms.

Inventory Electronics

Document all electronics and take photos of their setup for easier reassembly after the move.

Order Moving Supplies

If you're not using professional packing services, order boxes, tape, bubble wrap, and markers. For cardboard boxes, consider eco-friendly suppliers like ecobox (Austin, San Antonio). For crate rentals, look into options like bronko box (Austin) or bungo box (Dallas). This is also a great time to organize a packing party if you enjoy social packing events.

Plan for Painters and Repairs

If you plan to repaint or make repairs in your new home, schedule a few days before your move-in to allow for drying and easier access without furniture in the way.

Schedule Elevator Time

If moving into an apartment, check for any specific moving day requirements and book the elevator if necessary.

Service Your Vehicle

Have your vehicles serviced, especially if you're moving a long distance or across state lines.

Create a Packing Schedule

Develop a packing plan, organize your packing timeline, and label boxes according to their contents and designated rooms.

Book Storage

If you need a storage unit, now is the time to arrange it. Research storage options and book in advance to secure your space.

Three Weeks Before Your Move

Change Your Address

Visit your local post office or go online to fill out a change-of-address form. To ensure no mail is missed, ask a neighbor or the new resident to keep an eye out for any stray mail and check in with them periodically during the first month after your move.

Notify Friends and Family

Send change-of-address postcards or emails to friends and family to inform them of your new address.

Inform Important Parties

Notify banks, brokerage firms, your employer's HR department, magazines, newspapers, credit card companies, insurance providers, utility companies, and cable companies about your move to update your address.

Forward Medical Records

Arrange for your medical records to be transferred to new healthcare providers or obtain copies yourself. Seek referrals or check reviews for new providers.

Arrange for Pet Boarding/Babysitter

Consider boarding pets or arranging for a babysitter on moving day to simplify the process and reduce stress.

Confirm Parking

Ensure you have a legal parking spot at both your current and new locations for moving day to avoid any complications.

Gather Important Documents

Collect all crucial documents, including financial statements, legal papers, passports, and birth certificates, in one secure location for easy access.

Notify Your HOA (Homeowners Association)

Inform your HOA about your move if you haven't done so already to comply with any regulations or requirements.

Book Professional Cleaners

Schedule a professional cleaning service for your move-out or move-in cleaning. If you plan to handle the cleaning yourself, arrange for friends or family to help on moving day.

Two Weeks Before Your Move

Begin Packing

Start packing items that you use infrequently, such as seasonal kitchen gadgets or hobby equipment. Note items of special value that may need extra care. For packing tips and to minimize damage, refer to our blog. Print and review it to ensure a smooth packing process.

Prepare an Essentials Bag (or Box)

Set aside items for an essentials box with everything you'll need for the first 24 hours in your new home, including toiletries, a change of clothes, and basic kitchen supplies.

Back-Up Your Computer

Ensure all important data is backed up on an external hard drive or in the cloud to protect your files during the move.

Secure Valuables in a Safe Box

Use your inventory list to gather valuables such as jewelry, expensive purses, small but precious family heirlooms, important documents, or any other small, valuable items. Pack these in a safe box that you will personally transport to your new home.

Get Antiques Appraised

Have any antiques or high-value items appraised and inform your moving company to determine if additional insurance is necessary.

Label Everything Clearly

Label and number each box with its contents, noting if it's fragile, and indicating the room it belongs to. Place labels on both the top and at least one side for easy identification, even when boxes are stacked. Consider using a color-coding system, such as orange for kitchen items and blue for bathroom items.

Fix Minor Repairs

Complete any minor repairs in your current home to leave it in good condition for the next occupants.

One Week Before Your Move

Refill Prescriptions

Ensure you have enough medication to last through the move and the first few weeks in your new home.

Pack Your Suitcase/Emergency Bag

Finish general packing a few days before moving day. Pack a suitcase for each family member with enough clothes for several days, essential toiletries, a roll of toilet paper, and any necessary electronics, such as a Roku or Chromecast. Inform your movers about these suitcases so they can be easily accessible immediately after the move.

Clear Out Your Safe or Safety Deposit Box

If you're switching banks, remove all contents from your safe-deposit box and secure them in a safe box that you will personally transport on moving day.

Avoid Grocery Shopping

Refrain from buying groceries in the days leading up to your move. Plan meals to use up perishable items in your fridge and freezer, as most will not survive the move unless you're relocating nearby.

Prepare Washer and Dryer

For front-loading washers, locate the shipping bolts to stabilize the drum during transit. Check if the electric plug for your dryer matches the outlet at your new home; if not, purchase a compatible one from a home improvement store. Consider replacing old dryer hoses during the move.

Set Up Trash Removal

Arrange for trash and recycling services at your new home and cancel the service at your current residence.

Empty the Attic

Clear out your attic to ensure nothing is left behind. Many movers are not allowed to retrieve items from attics due to liability concerns, so make sure everything is packed and ready for transport.

Last Few Days Before Your Move

Defrost the Freezer

If you're moving your freezer, empty, clean, and defrost it at least 24 hours before moving day to avoid leaks and ensure it's ready for transport.

Empty the Refrigerator

Empty your refrigerator, but if you're moving directly to your new home, transfer its contents to coolers at the last minute. Load the refrigerator onto the truck last so it can be the first item unloaded, allowing you to quickly restock your perishables.

Plan for Payment

If you haven't set up a credit card payment, ensure you have cash ready for the moving company's payment and tip (10% to 20% is customary). If paying by credit card and moving to a new area, notify your credit card company of the upcoming charge to prevent any security issues.

Prepare for Cable and Internet Setup

Keep your TV, power cord, and internet modem easily accessible on moving day if you're scheduling cable and internet installation. Pack them with the first load so you can quickly set up your connections.

Handle Mattress and Bed Skirt with Care

Keep your bed skirt handy and put it on after the movers place the box spring but before the mattress is added to avoid lifting the mattress twice.

Remove Light Bulbs from Lamps

Take out any light bulbs from lamps and pack them separately to prevent breakage during the move.

Plan Furniture Placement

If you have access to your new home, use post-it notes to mark where larger furniture should go and label the rooms. This will make it easier for movers to place items correctly.

Clean and Dust Furniture and Rugs

Dust furniture and vacuum rugs at your current home to avoid bringing dirt to your new place. Clean the rugs thoroughly on moving day, as movers will remove the items on top of them.

Dispose of Hazardous Materials

Safely dispose of or recycle any corrosive, flammable, or poisonous items you have, as they should not be transported with your household goods.

Empty Fuel Tanks

Drain oil and gas from items like grills, heaters, lawnmowers, and snow blowers to prevent leaks and ensure safe transport.

Clean Outdoor Furniture

Clean your outdoor furniture thoroughly before moving to keep dirt and pests out of your new home.

Schedule Your Final Walkthrough

Arrange for a final walkthrough with your landlord if you're renting or moving out of an apartment. Ensure everything is in good condition to avoid any issues with your security deposit.

On Moving Day

Get Up Early

Start your day early to give yourself extra time for last-minute tasks and ensure a smooth move.

Prepare a Simple Meal or Order Take-Out

Avoid unpacking kitchen items by preparing a simple breakfast or getting take-out. This will help you keep your fridge empty and reduce stress.

Be Ready for the Movers

Ensure you are ready when the movers arrive to avoid delays. Being prepared helps facilitate a quicker and smoother move.

Protect Your Property

Lay down protective coverings for floors and doors if your movers don't provide them. This prevents damage and keeps your property safe during the move.

Begin Cleaning Early

If possible, have someone start cleaning the new home ahead of time. Leave space for the movers to work efficiently without obstacles.

Conduct a Final Walkthrough

Perform a thorough walkthrough of your old home to ensure nothing is left behind. Check high shelves, behind doors, on top of the refrigerator, and in all closets and cabinets.

A Few Days After Moving Day

Begin Unpacking

Start unpacking and organizing your new home by hanging pictures, arranging items in cabinets, and setting up furniture. If you discover items you no longer need, consider donating them. For tips on managing post-move overwhelm, check out our short blog post.

Check Safety Features

Inspect all carbon monoxide and smoke detectors to ensure they have fresh batteries. Verify that fire extinguishers are up to date and check other safety devices to confirm they are functioning properly.

Secure Your Home

Change all the locks in your new home, as you can't be sure how many people had access to the keys before. Update the garage door opener codes for added security.

Familiarize Yourself with the Area

Locate the nearest hospital in case of emergencies. Identify the closest bank, grocery stores, and shopping centers to make settling in more convenient.

Get to Know Your New Home

Find and label the water shutoff valves and the main circuit breaker. Check your air filters and replace them if necessary to ensure your home's systems are in good working order.

Review HOA Rules

Read through your Homeowners Association (HOA) rules to understand the regulations on property changes and maintenance. Check if your community has a recycling program and familiarize yourself with the guidelines.

Meet Your Neighbors

Introduce yourself to your new neighbors. Building good relationships can be helpful for keeping an eye on your home and creating a sense of community.

Host a Housewarming Party

Celebrate your new home by inviting friends and family over. Show them the efforts you've put into setting up your new space and enjoy their company.

Take Time to Relax

After all the hard work of moving, take some time to relax and enjoy your new home. You deserve it!