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Guerrilla Guide to Moving

We'll get to up-sizing, I promise.

But this month, I want to talk about moving.

Moving is tough. Moving takes stamina. Moving takes energy.

But moving is always the start of a new adventure in *loving where you live*, so usually it's worth it.

Let's take a look at some ways to make it smoother and easier than it otherwise might be.

xo

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Timing and Organization are Key

Get Started As Early As Possible

Okay, some moves are surprises.

But barring natural disasters and termination of month-to-month tenancies, you typically have at least a couple of months notice that a move will happen.

If you're buying a new home, usually you have at least 30 days between the contract acceptance and closing. In truth, however, you should have begun the process of preparing for the move when you began looking for the new digs - or when you put your place on the market.

An Aside About Doing It Yourself

I'm assuming in this post that you're *not* planning on doing everything yourself - i.e., I presume that you're going to hire movers for at least the large furniture and the boxes.

If not - if you're planning on moving everything yourself - then you're obviously much younger than me, with a lot more energy, but many of the points below still apply.

In an ideal world, you would hire movers to not only move the stuff but to pack it and unpack it, as well.

Most moves, however, involve packing and unpacking your belongings, yourself, and hiring movers with a truck (or two or three) to haul it all from one place to another.

So, that's the kind of move I'll be discussing here.

It's Time to Decide What's Really Important

From the standpoint of: Do I really need this? Is it worth the time, effort, and expense to transport it?

Perhaps most importantly: Will it serve me in my new space?

Even if you don't consider yourself a pack-rat, the rate and volume at which stuff accumulates is phenomenal.

If you read last month's issue of Harmonious Home Adventures (which you can find [here](#), if you didn't) you know that I agree with some of what Marie Kondo espouses - if it doesn't "spark joy," in anticipation of a move is a good time to get rid of it.



There are lots of ways to disencumber yourself of things that you no longer need, want, or use. My favorite is donating. If there is a chance to re-purpose something and let someone else get use out of it, the universe is just a bit better off for that effort.

There are lots of worthy causes that would love to have usable items that you no longer need: women's centers; homeless shelters; schools; veterans' centers - and there's always [Goodwill](#).



Then there is the ever-popular garage or yard sale. The trouble with garage sales, however, is that they take time and effort that typically is going to be better spent in other moving activities like packing and planning.

I've known people who have used the POD (storage container) method of moving that we'll talk more about in a minute and designated a separate POD for garage sale items. They kept the garage sale POD in storage until after they settled into their new home, then had it delivered and held a "moving in sale."

Not only did they rake in a little cash for the stuff they no longer needed, they also got to meet some of their new neighbors who stopped by to shop and chat.

As a last resort, or if the item is beyond repair or use, just toss it. Yes, it will take up landfill space but there is no reason to let your new home become a surrogate dump.

After the Purging - Then What?

Once you've decided what's going with you and what's not, you need to decide how to get it to the destination - the site of your new adventure!

Whether you're moving across town or across the country, the most common is to hire movers to transport your stuff from the old space to the new immediately - as in, load it up, cart it over, and unload it with no storage involved.

All of the typical methods of selecting a service provider apply to choosing movers - recommendations from friends or online, general company reputation, past experience. However you select them, though, **be certain that they're insured.**

Don't be shy about asking. And if they are less than completely forthcoming about providing the information, go elsewhere.

Don't Forget Utilities & Subscriptions

At least 2 weeks before the move, stop and/or transfer all of your utilities and other services:

- Electric service
- Gas
- Water (and trash and sewer, if separate)
- Cable
- Newspaper
- USPS change of address
 - Change your address separately from the post office for all magazines and catalogues you want to keep receiving
- Notify banks and credit card companies of your new address
- Update your address in "One-Click" delivery services like Amazon or Barnes & Noble

Interim Storage

If your move involves an interim period of time when your household goods will need to be stored, go for a portable storage container service. There are several - perhaps some even local - but the two best known ones are [PODS](#) and [U-Haul](#).

The system here is that your stuff - furniture, boxes, and all - is loaded into a container and stays there until you're ready to have it unloaded at its final destination. This avoids having to pack, unpack, pack, and unpack. The company will store the container for whatever length of time you need (we stored one for over a year) and bring it to wherever you designate.

Packing and Unpacking

I realize that sometimes a move comes as a result of a transfer or other circumstances that don't allow you to be fully informed about where you're going. In most circumstances, however, you will know the layout of your new home. And, in most circumstances, you'll have a general idea of where the furniture is going.

If you can, make a concerted effort to know not only where the furniture is going, but where the boxed items are going and pack accordingly.

Invest in a handful of bold black markers and label the boxes, not only with generally what is in them, but with *where in the new home they should go*.

This is a little counter-intuitive. Most people understand the wisdom of labeling boxes but they tend to label them with the space they came from, not where they're going to. And those two things quite often are not the same.

But do label them, and I suggest labeling them on top and two adjacent sides. That way, no matter how they are stacked, chances are the label will be visible.

And, when you're packing, make a decision of which items you will need first in a given space. Pack those in a separate box and label it "#1." As in, "Kitchen #1."

If you're highly organized, you can continue this kind of hierarchy and label all of the boxes for a given space according to the order in which you want to open them. But the first one is important. Identify it, and you'll save yourself a lot of frustration.

Be Firm

Try to stack all boxes going to the same location in the new home in the same place so that it will be easier for your movers to keep them together.

And be aware that they won't care very much about your "system." Their job (assuming that you haven't hired them to unpack, too) will be to get the boxes off of the truck and into your house. They're not going to be particular about where they put them, unless you insist.

So, insist. Tell them what the labels mean and insist that they pay attention. If they put a stack of boxes in the wrong room, ask them to move them.

You're paying them, after all, and if you don't insist that they move them, you'll just have to move them, yourself, later.

A Couple of Other Things

If your move is going to be a pretty quick turnaround affair, as in, packing and then moving and unpacking almost immediately, you might consider services that rent plastic bins, rather than using cardboard boxes.

It's a nice way to save some trees. This is a rental situation, though, so the longer you keep the bins, the higher the cost.

Preferably before the packing begins, certainly before the loading of the truck begins, you need to pack yourself a couple of "necessaries" boxes that should stay with you throughout the process and not get lost in the shuffle.



"Necessaries" includes:

- the toiletries you'll need
- medications - those you use regularly as well as pain relievers and muscle-ache ointment
- sheets, towels, pillows, your robe and PJs
- *Coffee pot and coffee* (this is my *most important* item)
- at least 2 full changes of clothes
- phone/tablet charge cords
- laundry stuff (detergent, fabric softener, pre-wash spray)
- anything you're going to need for work
- that book you've been reading at bedtime before sleep

There are LOTS of other considerations - bubble wrap or paper for wrapping? (I use both), fewer bigger boxes or lots of smaller ones? (I prefer lots of smaller ones), empty the drawers or leave them full? (consult with your moving company) - but space is limited.

Moving, no matter how organized and methodical you may be, is a disruptive endeavor full of hassle. Anything you can do to make it go more smoothly is worth the time so that, as quickly as possible, you can start

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ABOUT DEBRA

Debra's experience in home renovation, staging, styling, and redesign sets her apart from the crowd in the Fort Worth area real estate market.

- *Creativity* to re-imagine existing spaces for broader appeal.
- *Vision* to see opportunities where others see problems.
- *Insight* to know what buyers are looking for.

Debra doesn't just listen - she empathizes.
She matches buyers to spaces.

Debra doesn't just sell property - she maximizes potential.
She helps her clients find *harmony* in their lives.

You can - and should - love where you live!



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