

The easier way to declutter and downsize.

Moving is never easy. And if you've spent decades in the same home, it can feel overwhelming. Once you decide moving to a senior community is the right choice for you, you'll more than likely have to downsize. But figuring out your floor plan and its square footage can help you better determine what to keep.

60% of homeowners age 60+ say they have more things than they need.*

*University of Michigan Health and Retirement Study, 2010

12 tips for downsizing.

As you prepare for this exciting new phase of your life, here are 12 suggestions to make downsizing as easy as possible.

1. **Unpack your emotions:** Going through a lifetime of possessions can be an emotional process that might take longer than you expect. That's why it's important to start the downsizing process as soon as possible, so you have plenty of time for a few trips down memory lane.
2. **Get organized:** Create a list for every room in your house and sort each possession into one of three categories: Keep, Give Away and Decide Later. As you make your lists, consider whether you truly enjoy having a specific item around and aim to keep only those things that bring you joy. (Note: Everything on the Decide Later list eventually must move to either the Keep list or the Give Away list.)
3. **Be ruthless:** As hard as it may be to decide, keep only what you use or what has significant sentimental value.
4. **Just the necessities:** Choose the most necessary furniture items first like a bed, dresser, small kitchen table with a couple of chairs, couch and an end table. Then, if there's still room, you can add extra pieces.
5. **Pass it on:** Do your friends or family members have their eye on one of your possessions? Why not share now? You'll have the joy of watching them enjoy what's precious to you both.
6. **Be homey:** Keep only the possessions that make your house distinctively your home. Framed family photos, artwork and other cherished items should have a spot in your new place to help create a familiar and homelike environment.
7. **Clean the kitchen:** After you move you'll probably be cooking less and taking advantage of the community's meal plan more. Consider keeping only what you need and giving the rest away.
8. **Empty the shed:** When you choose a maintenance-free community like Peace Village, we'll take care of the mowing and leaf and snow removal. Plus, we'll look after the plumbing, heating and air conditioning, so you won't need most of your tools.
9. **Let go of your library:** Make sure to keep your favorite books, and then share the joy of reading with others by donating or selling the rest.

10. Freshen your linens: Take stock of your sheets, blankets and bath towels, and throw away any threadbare, stained or unmatched items. In fact, once you've moved, you might want all new items to match your new space.
11. Clothes and coats: Maybe one of the hardest things to go through are your coats and clothes. A good rule of thumb is if you haven't worn it in a year, then you probably don't need it anymore.
12. Now's the time: If you haven't already started decluttering and downsizing, how about tackling a drawer, closet or room right now?

Take the first step.

While letting go of years of accumulated possessions can be a daunting task, it can also be a liberating experience. Having less stuff to organize, clean and maintain can free you up to focus more on family, friends and special interests.

If you'd like to learn more about the living options at Peace Village and how we can help make your move more manageable, give us a call at (708) 361-3683.



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