

TOP HAT MOVER'S MOVING TIPS

PLAN, PLAN, PLAN

- OK you're hearing it here first. Follow the steps below or else.
- Some people like their moves to be easy. Some people like their moves to be hard. Which one are you? Don't make us tell you "we told you so!"
- So you've decided to make a move. Are you ready to box up everything you own – all the possessions that mean "home" to you and your family – and ship them to another part of the country? state? city? It's no wonder that moving is ranked among life's most stressful events. However, with the proper planning and preparation, you can make your next move a smooth one. These tips will serve as your "countdown" to moving day and hopefully give you a laugh or too (you'll need it).

SIX WEEKS BEFORE

Nobody starts this soon, right? Au contraire. Only those people that have moved before (and learned from their mistakes) or those that are terribly over-anxious will start now.

- Take an objective look at what you own, and decide what must go and what can be left behind. Books you've read and will never read again? Records you haven't listened to since college? The pan with a broken handle or the children's long-neglected games? Extra weight costs more money.
- If you have a lot of things worth selling, you may want to organize a garage sale (or apartment sale, co-op sale, oh, never mind).
- Start a central file for all of the details on your move. It's a good idea to buy a brightly colored organizer folder with pockets – you'll be less likely to misplace it. Make sure to collect receipts for moving-related expenses. Depending on your reason for moving, you may be entitled to a tax deduction (of course, if the landlord is after you for 6-months back rent, this won't apply).
- Create a floor plan of your new home, and begin thinking about where you'll want to place furniture. Advance planning eases the stress of making major decisions when your furniture arrives at your new home. Mark and label specific pieces of furniture on your diagram, and put it in your moving folder.

ONE MONTH BEFORE

GET ORGANIZED!

You'll thank us for this tip later.

- Notify the post office, magazines, credit card companies and friends and family of your change of address. The U. S. Postal Service offers a kit to make this process easier.
- Contact utilities (gas, water, electricity, telephone, cable TV, internet service provider) to schedule disconnection of services on the day following your move. You'll want to have utilities on while you're still in the house. Call the utilities in your new town (city, village, borough) to arrange for service to start the day before your move so that you have service when you arrive at your new home. And don't forget to arrange for an expert, if necessary, to install fixtures upon their arrival at your new home (our men are good at moving, but you wouldn't want them fiddling with your wires).
- Complete any repair work on your old home, and arrange for any critical services needed at your new home.
- If packing yourself, start packing seldom-used articles like fancy dishes and glasses, specialty cookware, non-essential clothing, curios, art, photos, and decorative items.
- As you pack, remember to keep each box light enough to be handled by any of the members of your family – not just the strongest person. Heavier items go in smaller boxes, lighter items in larger boxes.
- If you are planning a garage sale, pick a date at least a week before the move, and advertise it locally. Think about teaming up with neighbors who want to sell some of their old belongings, and plan a neighborhood "super sale."

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THREE WEEKS BEFORE

If you're still with me here, you're probably in the 1% group.

- Take inventory of your everyday household goods, such as radios, pots and pans and small appliances. Decide which items you will discard or put in storage.
- Self-packers: start your serious packing. Label the contents of all boxes, and pack carefully.
- As best you can, box essential items together, and write "Open First/ Load Last" on these boxes. When you move into your new home, you'll be able to easily identify these boxes and get to important items like pots, dishes, silverware, alarm clocks, bedding, pillows, towels, cherished toys and essential items for babies or children.
- Make sure you have your driver's license, a insurance records.
- Contact your doctors, dentist and veterinarian to receive copies of medical records.
- Pack phone books from your old town to make staying in touch with old friends easier.
- Make personal travel arrangements (flights, hotel, rental cars) for your trip (you'll probably need a vacation after this move).
- Plan your food purchases to have as little as possible in the freezer or refrigerator by the time you move. Use up all frozen items, and buy only what you'll eat in the next three weeks, because you probably can't take them with you (some of the guys might be helpful here...).
- Arrange to clean your new home, or plan to clean it yourself as close to move-in as possible. Since the home will probably be unoccupied by this time, make sure the cleaning is thorough and covers all those nooks and crannies usually blocked by furniture or appliances.
- Contact your children's schools, and arrange for records to be forwarded to your new school district.
- Make new bank safety deposit box arrangements near your new home. Make arrangements to safely transfer items from your old safe deposit box to your new one.
- Hold a garage sale now.

TWO WEEKS BEFORE

It's hard to be funny for so many weeks...

- Check with your insurance company to cancel current coverage or transfer coverage to your new home.
- Make arrangements for transporting your pets and any house plants, because movers can't take them in the van.
- Meet with your bank to change account status.
- Transfer all current prescriptions to a drug store in your new town.
- Cancel any delivery services such as newspapers. Consider starting a subscription to the newspaper in your new town to introduce you to local news happenings.
- Have your automobile serviced if you're traveling by car or renew your Metrocard if you're going across town.
- Be sure to empty secret hiding places to remove valuables and spare house keys.

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ONE WEEK BEFORE

If you haven't done anything yet, it would now be a good idea to start at least thinking about your move and pack a few boxes.

- Mow your lawn for the last time (if you live in an apartment, skip to the next tip, unless you really, really want to).
- Dispose of toxic or flammable items that can't be moved. Drain the gas and oil from gas-powered tools such as lawn mowers and snowblowers; movers will not take them if full.
- Double check to make sure arrangements have been made to disconnect and service your major appliances being moved.
- Pack your "trip kit" of necessary items that should go in your car and not the moving van: your checkbook, cash or travelers checks, medications, essential toiletries, light bulbs, flashlight, toilet paper, pet food, spare glasses or contact lenses, baby or child care items, toys and car games for children and your notebook with moving information
- If you have young children, arrange for a babysitter to watch them on moving day. Since you'll have your hands full, the extra attention from a sitter will distract the child's attention from the turmoil of a move. Same for pets.
- Also arrange for a babysitter to be available when you arrive at your new home with young children. Same for pets again, though I don't think fish will really care.
- Pack your own suitcase of clothes for the move.
- Put your "open first/load last" boxes in a separate place so the mover can identify them.
- Pay all outstanding bills. Be sure to indicate your new address on payment receipts.
- Remove any fixtures you are taking with you and replace (if specified in your home-selling contract).

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ONE DAY BEFORE

If you didn't follow any of the above steps, then this would probably be your best day to start packing and get ready!

- The movers will arrive to start the packing process (if you contracted for this service).
- Empty and defrost your refrigerator and freezer, clean both with a disinfectant and let them air out. Put baking soda or charcoal inside to keep them fresh.
- Arrange for payment to the moving company. This payment must be made when your belongings arrive at your new home – before your belongings are unloaded. Find out your moving company's accepted methods of payment, terms, and its policy for inspecting your belongings when they arrive to determine if any breakage has occurred. Don't forget tips for the men (they are grossly underpaid and appreciate your kindness and generosity (something that's lacking in their boss)).
- Empty your safety deposit box. Plan to take important papers, jewelry, cherished family photos, irreplaceable mementos and vital computer files with you.
- Write directions to your new home for the van operator, provide the new phone number and include phone numbers where you can be reached in transit – either a cell phone or friends, old neighbors, a place of business or relatives with whom you'll be in contact. You'll never be out of touch for long, should an emergency arise.
- Leave your forwarding address and phone number for your home's new occupants.
- If your old house will be

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THE DAY IS FINALLY HERE!

I'm exhausted just thinking about all you had to do, but try to relax. If you followed our tips above (and hired us) this day will be no sweat.

If you didn't: HELP! is here. We'll take care of everything! and charge you for it. But hey, we tried to warn you and help you. But did you listen? Noooooooooo!

- Remove linens from the beds and pack in an "open first" box.
- When the movers arrive, review all details and paperwork. Accompany the van operator to take inventory. Verify delivery plans.
- If there is time, give the home a final cleaning, or arrange in advance for someone to perform this service the day after moving out.
- If you arrive before the movers, take some time to tidy up your new home (dusting shelves, etc.) so the movers can unpack items directly onto clean shelves (if you contracted for this service). If you plan to line cupboards with shelving paper, this is a good time to do it.
- Unpack your car.
- Review your floor plan to refresh your memory about where you want furniture and appliances placed.
- Check to make sure the utilities have been connected, and follow up on any delays.
- Confine your pets to an out-of-the-way room to help keep them from running away or getting unduly agitated by all the activity. You might even consider boarding them overnight at a local kennel until you're settled.
- Plan to be present when the moving van arrives. Be prepared to pay the mover before unloading.
- One person should check the inventory sheets as items are unloaded. A second person should direct the movers on where to place items. Once all items are unloaded, unpack only what you need for the first day or two. Focus on creating a sense of home for your family. Give yourself at least two weeks to unpack and organize your belongings.
- Congratulations on your new home!
- Hope these tips made the transition a little easier for you.
- Don't forget to refer us to your friends.