

## Downsizing Your Digs

Whether your nest is becoming empty after many years or you're simply seeking a more carefree lifestyle, downsizing can be quite freeing, both to the soul and space. Here are a few easy steps that will help you downsize your digs.



### Step One: Think about what downsizing really means to your life.

As with most things, there are upsides and downsides to downsizing. Some of the minuses, for instance, include the fact that you may be giving up a familiar neighborhood and the comfort of your current home and you'll have the stresses of moving. The positives of downsizing are that you'll be reducing your monthly costs, and you may end up with more free time because you'll have a smaller space to maintain.

### Step Two: Consider your downsizing options.

Do you want a house with smaller square footage, or are you thinking more in terms of a condo in a community where your maintenance and lawn care will be taken care of? Make sure you consider your future neighbors and community regulations before you move. If you're seeking a more carefree lifestyle, you want to make sure your surroundings fit with that goal.

### Step Three: Go through each room of your current home and ask questions.

This can be a bittersweet trip down memory lane. The easiest place to start this process is in the lesser used rooms in your home – the attic, the laundry room, the basement or the spare room. There is less sentimental attachment in these areas and more items that are likely just being stored rather than used. Then you can move room-by-room through the rest of your home.



### Questions to ask as you sort:

1. **Does this have sentimental value to me?** If you feel particularly nostalgic about it, perhaps your children, another family member or a friend would enjoy owning it now.
2. **When was the last time I used this?** If you haven't used it for more than a year and it has no sentimental value, perhaps there is something else you own that already serves the same purpose. Or perhaps you simply don't need it anymore.
3. **Does someone else need this more than I do?** Clearing out unused items and having a garage sale can help pay for moving expenses or let you put some funds away for your next vacation. Sometimes the simpler lifestyle that comes with downsizing means we are better able to reach out and help others. Start now by donating unsold items or things you don't really need to a friend, neighbor or charity.
4. **Will this item serve a purpose in the new home I'm moving to?** Even if you haven't used it much in your current home, if you need it where you're moving to, keep it. You don't want to have to buy a new one!

#### Step Four: Make sure your new home has enough storage.

After you've sorted through everything, determine what your storage needs will be in your new home. If you have already chosen a builder and a home plan design, talk to your builder about storage and organizing options that will fit your home. If you haven't gotten to that stage yet, consult with your builder about what your storage needs are. Not only can your builder help you determine what home plan designs fit your budget, but they can also talk to you about storage and organizing system options that can be included in the cost of your home and, thus, included in your mortgage. That makes easy storage solutions only pennies a month!

#### Step Five: Have Fun!

This is a great time! Downsizing is a new adventure – a whole new opportunity to lighten your load and set out in a completely new direction in your life. Embrace this change and expect happiness as you downsize your digs.