

STRAIGHT TALK WITH

The Upsides of Downsizing

RESOURCES & TIPS FOR DOWNSIZING IN RETIREMENT

DOWNSIZING

The practice of decluttering has suddenly become almost glamorous, thanks to Japanese home-organization guru Marie Kondo, who wrote the book *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* and even got her own Netflix series.

Her philosophy revolves around simply parting ways with any items in your life that don't "spark joy." But for many people, it just isn't as simple as discarding items no longer in use, even when the number of possessions you own starts to feel less manageable.

That's because the accumulation of what some see as "just stuff" actually represents a lifetime of memories: starting and raising a family, going on vacations, celebrating career promotions, and more. Getting rid of those items may make you feel like you're lugging your whole life to the curb, too.



It's natural to feel nervous about the prospect of decluttering: It can be a daunting task, both physically and emotionally.

WHY START NOW: THE UPSIDES OF DOWNSIZING

Whether you're hoping to stay at your current home or planning a move to a smaller new home, downsizing has a lot of benefits. One of the biggest: Once you've taken steps to streamline your belongings to suit the next phase of your life, you may realize just how freeing it can be. With less "stuff" to maintain, you will spend less time cleaning,

organizing, and taking care of your belongings, leaving you with more time to do the activities you love with the people you care about.

The process can also be a long one, so allowing yourself plenty of time can alleviate some of the potential stress involved and give you some room to be mindful about what to do with the items you aren't keeping. Will you give them to family? Donate them to meaningful charities? Sell them online?

If you're like us, you've accumulated a lot of stuff over the years — and it's likely only going to grow with time. Downsizing can be a physical exercise, and beginning earlier may also help minimize the physical and logistical challenges that could arise later. You're the youngest you're ever going to be in this moment!

So don't wait until the movers are en route. Read on for a few ideas on getting started — and resources to lean on when you need help.

TIPS FOR PROACTIVELY PARING DOWN

If you're committed to downsizing, here are four more ideas to consider:

- **Start small:** Flex your decluttering muscles by paring down spaces like linen closets and half-baths before attempting the kitchen or garage.
- **Get rid of duplicates:** If you spot duplicates of frequently used items (like kitchen utensils), keep the one you reach for most often — then discard or donate the extras.
- **Try a photo finish:** If you have a large collection of sentimental items, considering choosing a couple of favorites from the bunch then cataloging the rest with digital photos. You can transform those photos into a coffee-table book, or simply look back on them occasionally for a smile.
- **'Pre-queath' your belongings:** If you plan to leave certain sentimental options to loved ones, consider doing so before your will takes effect! This has several benefits, including getting that item out of your space and having time to share its sentimental value with the recipient.



Beginning this process early on also ensures you'll have ample time to process the emotions that come up while you're sorting through that lifetime of memories.

Vi at Highlands Ranch resident Barbara Moser started downsizing her five-bedroom house years before making her move from Arizona to Colorado, which made her eventual move a breeze.

TOOLS TO HELP WITH A BIG MOVE

If you're in the process of selling your existing home, ask your real-estate agent if they have any contacts with move managers who could step in to assist with downsizing and other logistics of your move post-sale.

Or, look to an organization like the National Association of Senior Move Managers, which offers a searchable database of vetted professionals that can help with tasks from start to finish, including disposing of unwanted items to unpacking and setting up your new home.

Beyond the tactical stress move managers can alleviate, these professionals also have the benefit of being a third party outside your family. All their advice comes from a practical place of objectivity, with your best interests at heart.

LEAN ON YOUR RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

Retirement communities may have existing relationships with local move management companies, or a list of those that come highly recommended by other residents. They may also have a move-in manager on staff, and it never hurts to ask how they might be able to help you.

In addition to these resources and a wide range of expertise, Vi and many other communities also offer new residents access to floor-plan consultants who can help you determine how much you'll need to pare down your belongings to live comfortably in your new space. And at a retirement community, your new space is more than just your personal living area, the entire community is your home - from the restaurants, bar, and cafe, to the theater, art studio, and pool...the list goes on and on.

Before moving from Sarasota, Fla., into their villa at Vi at The Glen, residents Ray and Joan Racelis spoke with a floor-plan consultant and hired a move manager to take care of all the details, making their cross-country journey a breeze.

THINK CHARITABLY

You may even be able to offset the cost of a local move management company through a charitable donation during your move; move managers can work with their clients to determine which items can be donated to families in need, resulting in a tax deduction.

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While Vi at Palo Alto residents Steve and Beverly Docter were waiting for their apartment to become available, they slowly moved through the downsizing process — including making donations to Goodwill, Habitat for Humanity, and their local library.

Decluttering your home to prepare for the next stage of your life doesn't have to strike fear in your heart. And the end result — a clearer home, and maybe even a clearer mind — may actually spark joy.

The sooner you start, the sooner you can begin to focus on living life your way. Ask any Vi resident!

Curious about how Vi helps its residents manage their moves? Contact one of our sales counselors. We're here to answer questions about the logistics of moving to a retirement community — and everything that comes with it.