

The practicalities of moving house

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Moving house can be stressful and expensive: it's easy to feel overwhelmed by it and end up rushing through steps that might damage your possessions, or ending up costing you more in the long run.

Here we've provided some simple steps and tips to help you organise your move: even if you've moved before, these tips should still be useful.

General tips and costs

Use smaller boxes if you can. It can be tempting to pack up all your stuff in eight huge and very sturdy boxes...but actually these will be incredibly heavy to move, difficult to get up or down a flight of stairs and are actually more likely to break your possessions.

Even smaller boxes can get really heavy if you pack by item: in other words, don't pack one box full of books and another one full of towels and bedsheets. It is much easier to split items across boxes: try filling half the box with heavy things like books or crockery, and then the rest of it with softer furnishings.

Put heavier items on the bottoms of boxes and lighter items on top.

Label the boxes: a marker pen is fine for that, or if you want to re-use the boxes just use some tape to stick a sheet of paper on the side. Try to say what room it's for, and roughly what's in it.

When loading things into a car or van, try to pack the heavier boxes first (towards the middle of the vehicle) for balance.

Don't leave empty spaces in the boxes: try to be as efficient as possible. Fill in gaps with clothing or towels.

Try to avoid mixing items from different rooms in the same box: this will make your packing and unpacking a lot quicker.

Numbering each box in a very visible place: this makes it easy to see if one goes missing!

Tape your boxes up well - Use a couple of pieces of tape to close the bottom and top seams, then make a couple of continuous wraps all the way around the box's

top and bottom edges, where stress is concentrated.

Dealing with breakables - When you pack your dishes, put packing paper around each one, then wrap bundles of five or six together with more paper. Cups and bowls can be placed inside one another. **Remember** – you can use old newspapers as packing paper, or even t-shirts and tea-towels.

TVs – don't forget that plasma and LCD TVs can be ruined if you lay them flat. Make sure you keep them upright, and pack them carefully.

What supplies will I need?

Buying materials just for packing and moving might seem like an expensive waste of money, but is highly recommended. Remember:

Proper packing materials keeps your possessions from breaking.

Storage boxes are easy to store once you've moved, and are always useful. If you want to sell them, you can do so.

it's always better to get too many materials than too few. A last-minute trip to buy storage boxes is not just stressful, it's more expensive.

Storage boxes - Using good boxes is important. If you have used boxes and they're in decent shape (not bent, torn, or damp), go ahead and use those. If you need new ones, then you can find office archive boxes online quite cheaply, and these are very sturdy. Whether you choose old or new boxes, boxes of all shapes and sizes are useful.

Tape - Brown packing tape, not surprisingly, is ideal. Masking tape is not very good at all, but duct tape works quite well.

Packing paper or bubble-wrap – Great if you can afford it, but to be honest, old newspaper can work fine here. Don't forget that it can stain though.

Permanent markers - Get thick ones to mark your boxes easily. **Remember** - label boxes on the sides: the lids may be covered by other boxes.

The actual moving

You have a few options when it comes to moving: you can do it yourself by hiring a van, you can hire a moving service that load and unload their own van, or you can hire a 'full' moving service.

Doing it yourself - For some, it might be possible to use your own car (assuming you have one) to move. However, most people would need to rent a van from somewhere.

Popular rental companies are:

- o Europcar
- o Hertz

The different types of van they rent are:

- o Short wheel-base (these are a bit smaller and easier to drive, but can still fit a king-size bed!)
- o Long wheel base (these are a bit longer and can be more stressful to drive)

When you rent a vehicle, you will need to bring along:

- o Both parts of your driving license
- o A recent utility bill (sometimes two) from within the last six months.

Also, make sure you are aware of hidden costs, such as taking out insurance for the rental, and fuel costs. It is easy to underestimate how much time it will take to pack up your possessions, load up the van, and drive to your new home.

You pack, they load and drive - This option saves you the stress of driving a van, and it is less expensive than using a full-service mover. You share the space on the truck with other customers (if you don't need it all) and pay for only the space you use.

Hiring a full-service mover - This is the most expensive option, but good professional movers have the experience and equipment to move you quickly while avoiding damage to your property. They will even pack everything for you using their own boxes and materials, although this can cost an extra 20-30%.

Like everything, there are bad moving companies - be sure to carefully check the online reviews for anyone you're considering.

Moving out from a rented property – What are the cleaning costs?

End of tenancy cleaning is important for receiving your full deposit – otherwise there can be a dispute over your bond. As a tenant, you can do your own end of tenancy cleaning.

Remember - The landlord cannot force you to use any cleaning company, or a cleaning service at all.

However, the landlord can request the flat is left in the same state of cleanliness as it was when you moved in. This is generally something you can use your original moving-in inventory for as a guide.

Set aside enough time to do this if you plan on cleaning yourself: a serious 'deep clean' takes a lot of time.

You want your end of tenancy cleaning done right before the move out inventory, so the property is left as clean as possible.

If you decide you would rather hire a cleaning company for your end of tenancy, make sure you check reviews for them online first, as they can vary in how good they are.