

# **How to Create an Inventory or Packing List**

An inventory list, a list of all of your possessions, is crucial to have in case of natural disasters, theft, fire or other events that might destroy your belongings. This list will help you prove to your home insurance company what you had and what needs to be replaced.

Of course, the idea of making a list of everything you own can be daunting if you're looking at a large house packed with lots of stuff, but moving into a new place provides a great opportunity for starting fresh with an updated (or new) inventory list. This list can also double as a packing list.

## **Take Inventory One Room at a Time**

Don't think about making a list of everything you own; concentrating on making a list of everything in one room at a time. Start with the rooms you don't use often taking note of the big ticket items first and then moving onto the shelves and into the drawers as you go.

Moving tip: this is a great time to get rid of items you don't use or need!

## **Record Important Information**

A good inventory list should include the name of the item, a brief description, when and where the item was purchased or acquired, the make and model number if applicable, and the approximate value. Use a spreadsheet on your computer to keep all of this information organized.

## **Add a Visual Record**

A visual copy of your items will help prove the condition of your items if you ever find yourself needing to prove value. Digital photos stored with your spreadsheet are a fast and simple way to keep a visual record. You might also make a video of your items as you're taking inventory and describing each possession.

## **Store Your Inventory List Safely**

Remember that one of the main reasons for creating an inventory list is in case of disaster striking your home. For that reason, you'll want to keep your inventory list safe in a spot away from your home, like a safety deposit box, online storage system, or at a trusted friend's home.

## **Use your Inventory List as a Packing List**

Make your inventory list before a big move to make sure all of your items make it safely into a moving box and onto the truck. You can use the list again when you arrive at your

new home to make sure everything has arrived safely in the condition in which it was packed.

## **DIY or Professional Moves: Which Is Right for You?**

You've found the perfect home and you're ready to make the big move. Should you start packing boxes or hire professional movers to tackle the job for you? You'll pay more to hire a moving company than you will to pack up a truck yourself, but you may find the added expense is a worthwhile investment for your move. Making the best decision for you will depend on several factors, including budget, distance, and schedule.

### **Get a Quote**

Before you decide if a DIY or professional move is right for you, you need to have all the facts. Get a few quotes from professional moving companies. If you don't have a truck, you should also get a quote for a rental truck or trailer you'll use if moving alone and figure out how much you'll spend on moving supplies like boxes, packing tape, and other packing materials. If you plan to enlist the help of friends, remember to figure in the cost of pizza and sodas for your crew! This information will give you a more accurate picture of all of your options.

### **How Much Stuff Do You Have?**

The size of your home and quantity of stuff you have will definitely be a factor in deciding whether or not a professional mover is worth the investment. A small apartment can often be moved in one day with little more than a few friends and a couple hours with a moving truck. However, a large home filled with children and years of accumulated stuff can require much more work just to pack, let alone move from place to place.

In addition to the amount of stuff you have, you might also consider the quality of your belongings and how important it is to you that everything arrives in your new home in exactly the same condition as it left your old one. Buddies from work are much more likely to scratch up the oak china hutch than professional movers. An investment in professional movers can protect the one you've already made into your belongings.

### **How Far Are You Moving?**

A move across town will generally be much less stressful than a cross-country relocation. A professional moving company won't just make transporting items easier, but it can help ease stress at a time when you'll likely have a long list of things to do. The more complicated your move, the more you'll appreciate assistance from experienced professionals.

If you decide to hire moving professionals, get multiple quotes and ask for references. A little internet research can also help you learn a little more about the company's reputation before you hand over your deposit.

## Moving with Kids: Keeping 'em Safe and Entertained

Moving day is filled with hustle and bustle, which can be a recipe for disaster when small children are around. Dangerous objects in new places and distracted adults don't make for a safe environment for little ones. You might also find your kids are extra mischievous on moving day with all the activity going on around them and the excitement of changing surroundings. Plan to take a few extra steps to keep your kids safe and entertained on the big day.

### Tips for Keeping Kids Busy and Safe on Moving Day

**Recruit help.** The best scenario is to have your kids safely entertained at the home of a friend or family member while you take care of moving. If you don't have anyone in the area that can open up their home to your children for the day, consider hiring a babysitter to watch your kids in your own home while the packing and moving takes place. A designated sitter can take kids to a nearby park, make sure snacks and meals get served, and keep little hands out of big messes while you concentrate on moving.

**Designate a safe zone.** Set aside a space in the old home and new home that is safe for kids to play in. This might be the first room you empty at the old place or the first bedroom (ideally a kid's room) you unpack in the new one. Instruct your sitter or older children to keep everyone in the safe zone until the bulk of the heavy lifting and putting away is done.

**Pack and put up chemicals and sharp objects.** Normally, your household is probably child-friendly with all of the household cleaners stored behind a child-proof cabinet and sharp knives put away safely in a drawer. It's easy to forget about these safety measures when you're moving things around and it only takes a moment for a curious toddler to pull something toxic out of a box. Take extra precaution to pack cleaners, knives, tools, and other potentially dangerous objects first. Clearly label these boxes and keep them beyond the reach of your kids until they're unpacked.

**Allow time and space for food, rest, and play.** Keep the day running smoothly for everyone by avoiding tired, hungry, or bored children. Have snacks, lunches, and juice boxes easily accessible throughout the day. Keep sleeping bags or portable cribs unpacked for younger kids to take naps. Leave one box for books, videogames, crayons, or other age-appropriate activities that can be brought along to the new house with the last load and easily unpacked first when you arrive.

Remember that moving is a big change in everyone's life and expect questions and maybe even a few behavioral bumps in the road along the way. Making moving day safe and enjoyable for your kids will contribute to a smoother transition for the whole family.

## How to Pack a Moving Truck

If you hire a professional moving company, you won't need to worry about how to pack a moving truck. However, if you rent a moving truck, use your own, or borrow a buddy's with the intention of doing the heavy lifting yourself, these tips will help you make as few trips as possible and ensure all of your things arrive at your new home in the same condition they left your old one.

### How to Pack a Moving Truck

**Get prepared with the proper moving supplies.** Purchase several moving boxes of the same size to make stacking in the moving truck easier. If renting a truck, ask about renting appliance dollies and moving blankets to help protect your furniture. You'll be glad you took the time to have the right packing supplies on hand on moving day.

**Load the heaviest items onto the moving truck first.** Major appliances and your largest pieces of furniture should go into the truck first and be packed tightly against the back wall. Place moving blankets or pads on top of and between the appliances to avoid dents and scratches. Moving boxes can be stacked on top of appliances to fill additional space.

**Line mattresses and beds along the sides of the moving truck.** You'll need to disassemble your beds before moving; place all the hardware in a small plastic bag and tape it to the rails or headboard. Stand the mattresses and box springs up along the side walls of the truck to make the best use of your space.

**Stack moving same-size moving boxes from left to right.** Using same-sized moving boxes will allow you to make stable, secure stacks. Make sure you've labeled any boxes containing fragile items and place those boxes at the top of your stacks.

**Fill empty spaces with lightweight items.** As you fill your truck from left to right and front to back with larger items, you'll find you have open spaces. Use this space to load smaller boxes and lighter items that couldn't be packed in boxes. Take advantage of the space underneath tables and on top of chairs.

**Keep valuables with you.** Important papers and jewelry can be kept in a safe deposit box in the front of the truck with you. You'll want to know where this container is at all times.

Packing a moving truck is often compared to a game of Tetris. The goal is to fill leave very few open holes in order to pack your items securely and avoid having to make additional trips – or leave something behind.

## How to Pack Up Your Pantry for the Move

The kitchen may be one of the last rooms you pack, but you should begin the planning early. Figuring out how to pack your pantry for your move several weeks before moving day will prevent headaches and spills and may even save you money.

### Before Moving Day – Use It Up

Your goal in the days and weeks leading up to moving day is to use up as much food in your refrigerator, freezer, and cupboards as possible, especially anything that has already been opened. Take inventory of your freezer and make a meal plan that uses any meat or frozen vegetables you have on hand. Use up the last of your condiments and resist the urge to buy more before your move, or buy extra small sizes that you won't mind throwing out if you can't use it up. Still have three pounds left of that five pound bag of sugar? Plan a baking day and share the goodies with your neighbors – or just give them that last cup of sugar to remember you by.

When moving day arrives, throw out or give away anything that is opened. You'll also want to toss refrigerator items like milk or eggs. Don't even think about bringing the leftovers – now is the time to give your fridge a clean start! Make room in your moving budget to replenish your pantry with staples and fresh groceries.

### How to Pack Unopened Food

After eating or throwing away most of your food, you'll still have a few unopened boxes, bags, and cans. Use the proper packing supplies to safely move these items.

- **Sturdy moving box** – use these for heavy cans, boxed goods, and plastic drink containers. Heavy items should always go on the bottom with lightweight items filling any extra space at the top.
- **Plastic storage bags** – sealed boxes and bags of dry goods like flour and sugar that can make a mess if spilled should be sealed in bags before being placed in boxes.

Mark these boxes as fragile and pack on top of larger boxes when you load the moving truck.

## How to Pack So Packing Is Efficient

Whether you're moving a family of four across the country or moving to a new studio apartment across town, there is always a lot to do when moving out of one home and into another. Reduce your stress and workload by learning to pack efficiently.

### How to Pack Efficiently

**Have your moving supplies on hand before you start.** Purchase your moving boxes, bubble wrap, and markers for labeling. Once you sit down to pack up a room, you don't want to stop midway through to run out and get supplies.

**Have a donation box and garbage bag on hand.** If you don't use it, there's no need to move it. Get rid of the excess before you move so you won't have to unpack it and store it in your new home.

**Pack room by room.** When tackling any potentially overwhelming task – like moving an entire household – taking small, strategic steps helps you move quickly without being overcome by stress. Packing room by room will also keep you organized and make it easier to find everything when it comes time to unpack.

**Start with non-essentials first.** Get a jumpstart on moving by packing up rooms you don't use everyday first, then moving to rooms you do use and packing up the non-essentials, like decorations and out-of-season clothing. When it's time to unpack, you can start with the last boxes you packed, which should contain items you use every day.

**Label accurately.** Make sure every box has a label that tells what room the items belong in and what type of things are in each box. This will make it easier for professional movers or helpful friends to put boxes in the right rooms when it's time to unload the truck.

Using these tips will help make packing and unpacking more efficient and moving day less stressful.

## 5 Things to Do Now to Get to Know Your New Neighborhood

Saying goodbye to old friends and neighbors can make moving bittersweet, but it's comforting to know you have the opportunity to make new friends waiting in another neighborhood. Use these tips to start getting to know your new neighborhood before and after moving day.

- 1. Shop at the local grocery store.** The cashiers and other shoppers likely live in the neighborhood. Make a point at offering a friendly smile and look for a community billboard that might advertise neighborhood activities.
- 2. Go for a walk around the neighborhood.** Scope out the local shops, stop at the local playground, and just get familiar with your new surroundings. Don't be afraid to introduce yourself to new people you meet along the way.
- 3. Eat at a local restaurant.** Skip the big chains and look for a restaurant that appears to be locally owned. Make friends with the staff and let them know you're new to the area and looking for recommendations of things to do and see.
- 4. Join a community organization.** Whether it's a church, volunteer committee, or neighborhood watch group, a community organization gives you a chance to give back while meeting people in your neighborhood. Checkout the national websites of larger organizations to find local chapters, or visit your city's website.
- 5. Attend a local festival.** Local papers and community websites often have calendars listing monthly events. Make a point of attending festivals in your new neighborhood. You might even consider offering to help if you see a request for volunteers.

Putting yourself out there – both literally and figuratively – is the fastest way to make yourself at home in your new neighborhood. Remember that you don't have to become best friends with everyone you meet, but you're more likely to make friends if you make an effort to meet lots of new people. Think of your new neighborhood as an exciting new place to explore and embrace the opportunity for adventure.