

GARAGE SALES

Downsizing Tips

One reason you might consider holding a garage sale is that you're downsizing your home to better fit your lifestyle.

If the kids are grown, you might find you enjoy doing things other than maintaining a large house and yard. Or you may have retired and are looking forward to a life of fewer responsibilities and things. Here's how to downsize and get ready for your big sale without pulling your hair out.

PACE YOURSELF

As soon as you decide to downsize, get started sorting what things you're going to give away, what you're going to throw away and what you're going to sell. But don't think you have to do the entire house at one time. Pace yourself and work according to a timeline that will let you start your life in a reasonable amount of time. There are several methods of decluttering; pick one that works for you.

Consider focusing on one room at a time, for instance,



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and break it down into smaller, easy-to-complete tasks that will keep you focused. Address the junk drawer in the kitchen. Then the bottom cabinets. Then the top cabinets. And so forth.

PLANNING FOR YOUR NEW SPACE

As soon as you get a good idea of what your new space and life will look like, start measuring out the room you'll have for your things.

You may love the giant china cabinet in the dining room, but it may not fit in your new home. Get ready to make some tough decisions about what you can use, what you can use in a different way, and

what needs to go.

Some questions to keep in mind when the decisions get really hard:

- What are your reasons for downsizing?
- What opportunities will downsizing create?
- What are you most excited about in this process?
- What's the first thing you want to do when you're settled in?

MEMORIALIZING ITEMS

Of course, donating an item, selling it or throwing it away doesn't do away with the memories associated with it. Remind yourself of that often during the process, especially as you comb through any maybes that you've sorted out along the way. You can pass it on to a family member where you'll know it's still getting used (and even maybe see it from time to time) or you can memorialize it with a photo.

The taking-a-photo method is a great way to preserve notes, cards, kids' artwork and other mementos without preserving piles upon piles of paper. Once you have the photos, create a digital scrapbook that you can look at and share whenever you'd like. You could also create photo books to help you remember or to give as gifts.

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SELLER'S TIP

Remove Emotion From Items You Sell

Downsizing, especially if you're moving from a family home, can bring up a lot of memories. As you sort things for sale, separate the emotions and sentiments from the item itself. That can keep you from hanging onto stuff that you should really get rid of and also keep you from overpricing things at your sale. Remember that a good rule of thumb for garage sale pricing is 10% of retail value. To get a good idea of pricing, do a quick internet search on that item and prices to see what the market is now.

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