

PACKING TIPS

Here are some tips to help make your move simpler and less stressful.

Before you start

You don't need to leave everything to the day before the move. Consider what you don't need to take with you, what will need careful packing, and that you are covered for potential breakages.

- > Make a priority packing list
 - > Take some time to sort through your belongings and have a clear-out. You can make up a box for charity and if you have time, hold a car boot sale or log onto an online auction, then put the proceeds of your sold goods towards some re-decorating or a new carpet.
 - > Calculate how many boxes you will need and get these well in advance. Find boxes in a variety of sizes. Think about what else will be useful, such as strong tape, bubble wrap, and self-seal bags for keeping nuts and bolts together. Save old newspapers for lining boxes.
 - > Don't completely fill large boxes, as they will be too heavy to move.
 - > Use sturdy packing boxes, particularly for heavier items, or your belongings may end up strewn all over the pavement. Boxes made from corrugated cardboard are stronger than regular ones. You can usually find these at supermarkets or large retail stores, but make sure that they are clean.
 - > Check that your contents insurance will cover damage and breakages during the move. Put all hazardous materials, such as paint, bleach and aerosols, into a separate box and keep them away from the rest of your stuff.
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Think ahead

Unless you travel light, you won't be able to unpack everything in the first day, so it's worth deciding what you might need easy access to soon after you move to your new home.

- > Pack an 'essentials' box for the first night in your new home and carry it with you. Instant access to coffee, tea, snacks, cups and a kettle may be welcome soon after you arrive. As will plates, utensils and a kitchen cloth.
 - > Prepare an overnight bag for everyone in the family, and make sure that there is enough toilet paper and toiletries for everyone.
 - > Other useful items that should be kept close to hand are a torch, a first-aid kit including pain relievers, pencil and paper, and re-closable plastic bags, along with a small tool kit.
 - > If possible, finish any laundry well before you move to avoid packing damp clothes. Keep a separate box/bag for dirty washing.
 - > Make sure the boxes containing items you need the least are loaded up first.
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Sensible packing

Spend some time considering how you are going to pack your possessions. Books are easy but heavy, valuables need careful wrapping and will take time, and some furniture may need to be dismantled.

- > Start early. Packing always takes longer than anticipated, particularly when you start reminiscing over old photographs stored in the attic or you realise that you need to dismantle the wardrobe to get it downstairs.
- > Begin at the top of the house and move downwards. If you have an attic, it's a good idea to sort it out first.
- > Always pack heavy items in small boxes. It will make transporting them easier. Also, keep the weight of all boxes to a minimum to avoid any back injuries.
- > Pack one room at a time, clearly labelling each box with details of its contents and the room to which it belongs.
- > Clearly label boxes that contain breakables and also those that are load-bearing and can be stacked in the van.
- > Keep all boxes for each room together. This will save time unpacking.
- > It may sound obvious but pack heavier items on the bottom of the box and lighter items on top.
- > Wrap items individually and place in a box that's been lined with several layers of newspaper and a sheet of bubble wrap. Any breakables should also be wrapped in bubble wrap. Use clean tissue or wrapping paper for the first layer to prevent newspaper print leaving marks. Pillows and blankets are also useful for wrapping valuables and protecting furniture prone to dents and scratches.
- > Pack important documents together, such as birth and marriage certificates, and keep them in a safe place.