

57 Things to Do When Moving into a New House

6 to 8 Weeks before the Move

1. Hire a Moving Company

Once you know when you will be able to move into your new home, one of the first things you should do is either hire a moving company **or reserve a moving truck (and some friends to lift boxes, appliances, and furniture)**. If you have a specific moving date in mind, the earlier you schedule your movers, the better. It is also good to keep in mind that scheduling your move during the week will typically cost significantly less than hiring movers for a weekend or holiday.

2. Gather Packing Supplies

While you can buy boxes and other supplies for packing, there are a lot of packing items you might **already have in your house** that you can use to **save you money** and make sure your belongings are not broken or damaged during the move. You can also ask businesses for their extra boxes, which they will usually give you for free. **Liquor stores and cardboard recycling centers are a great source for free boxes; just call ahead to ask them to reserve them for you.**

3. Downsize and Consolidate

Moving is **the perfect opportunity to get rid of things** you don't need and are no longer using, and it will save you the time and hassle of moving unnecessary items. Downsizing may be challenging both physically and emotionally at first, but it can also be rewarding and relieving. Now is the time to pitch that garage sale you've been talking about for ages. This gives you the chance to **make a little cash** selling what you can, and then you can **donate** the rest to a worthy cause.

4. Take Inventory of Your Belongings

Before you begin packing, make an inventory list of **everything you own**. This may seem like a daunting task, but it is important to know if anything was stolen by your movers or to document the undamaged state of an item in case of damage by your movers. It will also help you organize as you pack and move.

4 Weeks Before Moving Into a New House

5. Confirm Your Transportation

It is always a good idea to check in with your moving company and **confirm your moving date in advance** to make sure you are on the same page. If you need to make any other travel or transportation preparations, now is the time to take care of those as well.

6. Measure for Furniture Fits

Measure all of your furniture and make decisions about **what will and won't move with you** into your new home. The items that do not fit or you no longer wish to keep can be sold or donated.

7. Start Packing and Labeling

Packing can be stressful and is best if not done all at once. **Start by packing your most infrequently used belongings and valuables.** Be sure to **clearly label** everything as you go and keep objects separated by where they are generally used or stored. It can even be helpful to develop a color and number system that coordinates with the rooms in your new house. You can label each box with the appropriate marking, so they are **easy to identify** during the move.

8. Make a Folder for Important Documents

It is wise to create a folder that contains **important documentation you may need during the moving process** and that you would like to keep safe and separate from the rest of your files and papers as you pack. These documents include **medical and dental records**, school records, your insurance and **home warranty policies**, financial statements, passports, and receipts from moving expenses.

2 Weeks: Things To Do Before Moving

9. Change of Address

If you want to receive your mail (and not inundate the new residents of your old home), **officially changing your address** with the Postal Service is an important step

to remember. **Change of Address forms** can be found at your local post office, or you can even fill out the form online.

10. Notify the Notables

There are a number of **important companies** and other entities you will **need to notify** about your move. These include your insurance company, bank, internet and phone providers, and cable company. You will also need to **update your driver license and car registration** with your new address; some states will allow you to notify them of your new address to avoid paying for a new license card or registration.

11. Keep Packing

This is not a quick process. It is hard to move an entire home, but do not let it be discouraging or stressful. **Keep a steady pace and stay organized.**

12. Notify Family, Friends, and Neighbors

While you are in the process of having your address officially changed, go ahead and **email your neighbors, friends, and family** your new address too. This is also the time to start enlisting the help of friends and family with a moving save-the-date, so they can plan for and be prepared to help you move.

13. Arrange Time Off Work

Give your boss plenty of notice about the amount of time off you need for your move. You do not have to miss work to move, but you should keep in mind that **weekend and holiday rates** for moving companies are **always higher**. While it may be nice not to have to take off work for your move, moving during the week is **guaranteed to save you money**, and you won't be so worn out from a weekend move come Monday morning when you go back to work.

14. Ease Up on Buying Groceries

Obviously you can't rid your house of food completely before you move, but **the less you have to move or throw away, the better**. A few weeks away from moving day, you might want to **avoid the grocery store** when possible and start in on some of those things that have been hanging out in the refrigerator, freezer, or pantry for a while. If you don't remember how long you've had an item in the fridge or freezer, toss it.

1 Week Before: Moving To Do List

15. Transfer Utilities

Gas, water, and electricity are all **necessities**, so you don't want to end up in your new home without your utilities. You will need to **notify your utility companies** of your move and schedule for each to be turned off at your old house and turned on at your new one. **Keep in mind that sometime these are the same companies, and in other cases, you have to start with a new provider.**

16. Return Borrowed Items

Remember all those books your friend lent you last year that you never gave back? Now is the time to be thoughtful and return them to their rightful owner. There is **no sense in packing and moving things that are not even yours**. You can also use moving as an excuse to ask for people to return anything you have lent out. However, if there is anything you don't really need back, save yourself the extra packing and let it stay in its new home.

17. Map Out Where Everything Will Go

Map out your new home to make move-in **less stressful** and **more organized**. You can designate where everything is going before you actually start moving your things in, that way you **don't waste time and energy** moving things around after you have just moved them into your house. This is also a good opportunity to make sure you know where everything is, such as the circuit breaker box and hot water heater. **Double check room measurements** to make sure that everything you plan on moving will fit.

18. Finish Up Packing the Bulk of Your Items

Once you are within a week of your move, the goal should be to have the **bulk of your possessions packed up and ready to go**. You can **keep out the essentials**, but if you can go without it for a few days, box it up.

19. Deep Cleaning

Even if your house is brand new, you are going to want to do some cleaning before

moving in, and if it is a previously owned home, this is a must. New homes may not require quite the **deep clean** that older homes do, but it is likely that contractors, builders, and construction workers have left their mark during the building process. For the most efficient results, **cleaning should be the last thing you do before the movers arrive** with all of your things. Of course, some cleaning will be required after move-in, but all of the major work is much easier to accomplish with an empty house. In addition to general cleaning, don't forget to have the carpets cleaned as well.

20. Throw Away Hazardous Materials

Due to their **hazardous nature**, materials such as gasoline, old paint, certain cleaning supplies, pool chemicals, and some fertilizers and pesticides are **not allowed** on moving vans and will have to be disposed of before you move. Be sure to **use proper disposal methods for all of your hazardous materials.**

21. Cancel or Reschedule Any Deliveries

If you receive a newspaper or any other type of daily or weekly delivery to your home, be sure to **cancel the service before moving.** If you wish to continue the service after your move, and that is an option, reschedule the service to continue at your new location.

22. Go Over the Moving Plans

You can never be too thorough. You booked your mover at least a month ago, so there is **no harm in checking one last time** to make sure your scheduling is all lined up. Sometimes, the scheduler can make a mistake and put you on the wrong date accidentally. **It's worth a 5 minute call to avoid a major headache** on moving day. At this point in time, you are likely to have a clearer idea of your **moving day timeline** and can give better details to your moving company. This is also the time to firm up any plans with friends or family that might be assisting you with your move.

23. Spray for Bugs

Do you want **hundreds or thousands of uninvited guests** sharing your house? If not, then spraying for bugs before moving everything into your new home is critical. Just because you don't see any creepy critters around, it doesn't mean they are not there or won't show up once you have moved in. You are always **better off safe than sorry**, and the bugman will be able to spray more thoroughly with less obstacles if you opt for spraying before your things arrive. You also **eliminate the risk** of exposure to harmful chemicals by spraying while the house is still empty.

24. Make Copies of Closing Documents

After you close on your house, you will want to **make copies of your closing documents** and **find a safe place to store the originals** somewhere outside of your home. You should **keep the photocopies at home** in case you ever need them for reference, but the originals are safer kept in a **fireproof safety deposit box** at your bank or filed with your attorney.

25. Paint the Walls

Once you move everything into your new house, painting becomes a much more challenging endeavor. While your new place is empty, go ahead and give the walls a fresh coat, even if it is with a neutral color you think you might want to change later. A **fresh coat of paint does wonders to freshen up your home**, plus painting is also a great way to add a personal touch to your new house. You do, however, want to be aware of cracks, holes, or other defects in your walls and ceilings. Sometimes a cosmetic fix is what's in order, but **other times cracks can mean there are major structural issues with the home**. Be sure to address these issues before painting and seek professional assistance if necessary.

26. Replace Toilet Seats

Changing the toilet seats in your new home is a good idea for obvious sanitary reasons, as well as aesthetic. It is relatively easy to do and will make your new house feel a little more like your own. All you need to do is take a toilet count and measure the

approximate difference between the two bolts that fasten the seat to the commode and the shape of the seat. **Surprisingly, there are a few different common commode shapes and hole spacing options.** Then you can visit your local hardware store and pick out whatever suits your fancy. .

27. Locate Water Leaks

Check for **plumbing leaks, dripping faucets, and running toilets.** A trick to see if you have any unidentified leaks is to check your water meter before and after a long stretch in which you know no water has been used in your house. **If the readings are not the same, you know you have a leak that needs to be identified and fixed or a faulty meter.**

The Day Before the Move

28. Defrost Your Freezer

You may need to **start defrosting your freezer** a little more than 24 hours in advance, depending on the level of frost build-up, its size, and whether it is located in your house or out in your garage (though there are ways to speed up the process if you are in a time crunch). You should also go ahead and clean out your refrigerator, **throwing out or eating anything expired or that you don't plan on moving.** Be sure to have a cooler or two on hand to keep refrigerated items cold that you plan on transporting during the move.

29. Pack the Essentials

There are going to be those last few things that you need to use until just before moving that will have to be packed last minute, as well as things you know you will need your first night in your new home. Be sure to **keep these things separate and clearly labeled,** so you will be able to find them when you need them the following day.

30. Prepare a Move-in Day Survival Kit

On move-in day, you are going to have a lot on your mind, so the chances are you are going to **forget something simple** but essential for moving. A great way to safeguard yourself against arriving at your new home only to realize you don't have a single roll of toilet paper (or some other equally important and easily forgotten item) is to make yourself a survival kit ahead of time. All you need to do is pack a bag or box of a few things you know **you won't want to find yourself without and put them in your car the day before the big move**. Of course you can include whatever you think you will need, but some recommended items include: toilet paper, medication/aspirin, pocket tool/knife, trash bags, power strip and phone charger, clorox wipes, paper towels, cleaner, toothbrush/paste, water and snacks, band-aids, and a notepad and pens or pencils.

31. Charge Your Phone

You are going to need your phone a lot throughout the day, so you will want to start off with a **full battery**. **You could purchase an external battery for \$20-50 that can be plugged into your phone as well**; your full battery may still run out with all the extra usage that typically ensues during a move.

32. Locate Both Sets of Keys (Old and New)

Keys are critical, but they never seem to be where you thought you put them when you need them. After you move everything out, you will need to lock up your old home and turn in the keys. You are also going to need your new keys in order to move all of your stuff into the new house. **Save yourself the panic on move-in morning** by locating all the keys you will need the night before and **putting them in a safe, memorable place**.

The Day of the Move (Pre-Move)

33. Disassemble Furniture

Furniture can be challenging to move. You will need to take apart any furniture that cannot or should not be moved in one piece. You may want to use **protective**

padding on sharp corners and **blankets** to **avoid any scratches or other damage to either the furniture or walls and doorways.**

34. Explain the Plan of Action

In order to be **as efficient as possible**, it is best for everyone involved to know what's going on. Take the time to do a **quick walk through** with your movers and any other helpers to explain what is going where and anything else that needs to be done before you begin..

35. Final Walk Through and Cleaning

You will want to **make one final round** through your old home before leaving, just to make sure that nothing has been overlooked or left behind. This is also a good chance to tidy up and do some light cleaning. While it is not required for a home sale, it is courteous to **leave your old home clean for the incoming residents.** For a home rental, most of the time cleaning is required upon vacating, and it is best to have an outside vendor clean the home, **so you can prove that you had it cleaned by supplying your landlord with an official, third-party receipt.**

36. Leave Contact Information for New Residents

It is always nice to leave behind a friendly welcome note and any useful information about your house for your old home's new residents. You can include your contact information as well, so they will be able to reach you or send along any mail they come across, if necessary. But **be cautious of how much information you share**, since you don't know who the new people are and whether or not they are trustworthy of having your name, email, phone number, and especially your physical address.

37. Lights Out and Lock Up

Once you have completed that final walk through and said your goodbyes, it is time to **lock up and head out.** Make sure you **do not leave on any lights** and that all of the doors, front, back, and other, are **securely locked.**

38. Photograph (Old) Utility Meters

Before you leave, record the readings on and **snap a photo** of your utility meters. This

can be **used as a reference** later to make sure that you do not get charged for any utility usage that is not yours.

The Day of the Move: New Home Checklist

39. Photograph (New) Utility Meters

Just like at your old house, you want to **make sure that you are not charged for someone else's use of the utilities**. Before you do anything else, take a quick picture of the meters and jot down the readings. This can be **compared to your first utility bill** to make sure everything lines up properly.

40. Direct Boxes to the Right Place

This is where your **handy-dandy floor plan** and your **strategic labeling** come into play. As your boxes make their way into your new home, be sure to direct them where they need to go. You don't want to **waste time or energy** shuffling boxes around a second time.

41. Check Your Inventory and Survey for Damages

Not only is an inventory list useful for making sure nothing is left behind at your old house, it is equally handy for making sure everything arrives safe and sound at your new house. Before your movers leave, you want to **make sure nothing was damaged or broken** in the move, and if it was, contact the moving company and ask them to reimburse you or deduct the cost of replacing the item from your moving bill.

42. Change Your Locks

One of the most important things to do when moving into a new house is to **change the locks** because the last thing you want is to compromise the safety of your new home. Some may worry that changing the locks on their home will be too expensive, but it does not have to be. **Rekeying is an affordable solution to securing your locks without having to cover the cost of new hardware**. It is a simple process in which the inner mechanisms of a lock are reconfigured, rendering old keys useless. **New keys are cut to match the new lock configuration**, and the old lock is as secure as if it were brand new. When changing your locks, have a **spare key made to give to**

someone you trust. Gone are the days of hiding a key under the doormat or in a flowerpot, but it is always **nice to have a backup** in the event of a lockout.

43. Unpack the Essentials

When unpacking, start with what you know you'll **need right away**. Do not try to unpack everything at once; you can **organize as you go** without feeling overwhelmed. It is best to start with those last few boxes you packed, your essential items, and then you can go **room by room** after those things have been taken care of.

44. Meet the Neighbors

The sooner you take the opportunity to **meet the people living around you**, the sooner **your new place will start to feel like home**. And who knows, your neighbors might even be able to lend a hand with unpacking or offer suggestions on the best place to pick up groceries nearby.

45. Take Time for Yourself

Just remember, Rome wasn't built in a day, and **your house does not have to be completely unpacked and presentable to visitors the day you arrive**. It is best to pace yourself as you unpack and set things up as you go. There is no need to rush. It is good to **take breaks to eat or go outside** and meet a neighbor or two. When it comes to the end of the day, allow yourself a good night's sleep after a long day of moving. Don't worry, the boxes will still be there in the morning.

46. Check the Hot Water Heater

120°F (55°C) is the **ideal temperature** at which to set your hot water heater. Rarely will you ever need to use water that is hotter than this. Water any hotter can actually scald you or your children, so keeping it set at a higher temperature is **unnecessary, costly, and potentially dangerous**. If you want to go the extra mile on energy efficiency, you can also purchase a blanket for your water heater. Some have better insulation than others, and **older hot water heaters may have little insulation at all**. By wrapping it in a blanket, you are trapping the heat in the water instead of allowing it to warm the air around it. Just be careful not to cover the top or bottom of the heater, as well as the thermometer or the burner compartment for safety reasons.

47. Put Up Window Treatments

Window treatments should be installed **as soon as possible** for both **privacy** and **safety**. If you don't have any picked out and purchased ahead of time, it is easy to fashion your own makeshift curtains with a sheet until you can put something more permanent in place, but be careful if your rental agreement or homeowners' association prohibits makeshift curtains.

Within 7 Days: Things To Do After Moving

48. Finish Unpacking and Organizing

While you definitely do not want to rush yourself, there is a **sense of accomplishment in unpacking that final box**. You will feel much more at home when you have had a chance to set up your house the way you want it to look and are no longer living out of boxes.

49. Test Smoke Alarms

Testing the smoke detectors is critical to enhancing the safety of your new home. What most people don't realize is that simply pressing the button on the detector does not determine whether or not it is actually functioning properly. **All this tests is if the batteries are working or not**. While it is important to **change the batteries** in your smoke alarms regularly, you want to make sure that in the case of a fire, the alarm will actually detect smoke like it is supposed to. The **ONLY** way to do this is by **testing it with real smoke**.

50. Check Your Old Mailbox

Even when you fill out a Change of Address form, you are still going to want to **check your old mailbox a few times after the move** because it is possible for the occasional piece of mail to show up at the wrong location; some types of mail are not forwarded by the Postal Service at all. If your old home is not within a reasonable distance to revisit, **see if a former neighbor or someone else you know in that area can check it for you**.

51. Get to Know the Local Food Scene

You have to eat, so getting to know the local food scene is a **useful and fun** way to familiarize yourself with your new surroundings. Ask your new neighbors for any suggestions they might have and do a little online research. Scout out the best grocery store nearby, and take some time to try out any and all of the local takeout joints that sound appealing. **Having a favorite go-to restaurant in the area will make your new house feel much more like home.**

52. Secure Your Garage Doors

There are several components to garage door security you will want to consider when moving into a new house. **The first and most immediate is to make sure that you do not leave your garage open when it doesn't need to be.** This is a display of everything you may have stored there and gives easy access to your home. You don't want to have boxes from your latest big screen TV purchase displayed in your garage for all driving or walking by to see. Second, you will need to **reprogram your garage door remotes and keypad.** There is usually a simple procedure used for resetting the remotes to your garage door opener, and this is important because it eliminates the possibility of any previous residents or realtors who may have had an additional remote from gaining access to your garage. Third, it is wise to have a **routine garage door maintenance check** performed on your garage door before or just after moving in. **Garage doors wear out over time** and need to be serviced from time to time to make sure they are operating properly.

53. Replace Old Air Filters

Replacing your air filters is **quick and easy**, and it helps prolong the life of your air conditioning unit, as well as making it more energy efficient. Dirty filters don't filter the air as well and do impact airflow, meaning your unit has to work harder to pump lower-quality air. **Clean filters mean cleaner air** and less stress on your unit. Just be sure to check the measurements of your filter before going to buy new ones, and pick up **a few extra just to have them on hand.**

54. Replace Switch Plates and Outlet Covers

There are several minor updates you can make to your new home that will give it a **more polished feel.** Install new switch plates and outlet covers for cleanliness and

uniformity. In older homes especially, it is not uncommon for these to be damaged, discolored, or unmatched over time. **Vent covers also have a tendency to lose their luster as they age** and are easy to replace.

55. Create a Fire Escape Plan and First Aid Kit

After settling into your new home, it is important to develop a family escape plan and put together a first aid kit. **Adequate preparation** in the event of a disaster can **make a world of difference** in the outcome. Make sure you **review and practice your plan**, and do not forget to review proper fire safety practices. **Store your first aid kit in a central location** within the house and inform everyone of where it is kept. Be sure to keep it well-stocked and replenish any supplies you may use.

56. Service Your Heating and Cooling Units

Don't wait until the **dead of winter** or the **dog days of summer** to realize your heating or air conditioning system is not working properly. As soon as you buy your new house, have all of the mechanical equipment cleaned and serviced to make sure everything is not only running but operating efficiently. You should also consider obtaining a home warranty, so when the more extreme temperatures do arrive, you will be able to have service done quickly without being overcharged.

57. Make a Routine Maintenance and Cleaning Checklist

To keep your house in **optimum shape**, you should **make a checklist of maintenance and cleaning** that need to be performed regularly. Go through all the items on your list for the first time and then keep to your schedule.

AND

Welcome Home!