

Senior Advice: Ta-da! To do list will reduce moving to-do

by *Doug_Mayberry*

Q: We are moving to a new home in a retirement community that is under construction. Our move is scheduled in about two months. We have lived in our home more than 20 years, and we would like to make our move as efficiently as possible. Can you suggest a checklist?

A: Your move will be much easier if you make a "to do" list and prioritize it. No doubt you have collected a great number of "treasures of a lifetime." Now it is important to inventory what you need and what you don't.

You need to consider whether you want to purchase new living room furniture or re-cover your current furniture? If you elect to dispose of furniture, does any family member want it? Tag those things you want to dispose of as either family gifts, for sale or for charity. Use different colored tags.

For those things that won't make the move, include removal dates on the tags so recipients know when they must be retrieved. Alert recipients that if they fail to pick up those items on time, they will be gone.

Next, are you planning to move yourselves or hire professionals? If it is a self-move, schedule any volunteer help. If you choose professionals, contact three companies for estimates, take photos or videos of what will be moved in case of damage and insurance claims. Begin collecting boxes and packing materials. Label each box so you can easily locate your things at your new home. Encode the colored labels for the kitchen, living room, and bedrooms.

Plan to skinny-down your home and garage's contents. Coordinate both your old and new effective dates with your post office, doctors, insurance company, banks, utilities, gardener, and others who need your forwarding address and phone numbers. If you live in a rental, give your landlord sufficient notice to determine your deposit refund.

If you plan to sell your home, prepare a list of important things to be done before putting it on the market. This is an excellent time to eliminate clutter so as to sell your home faster and at a better price.

Take time to concentrate on clothing, photos, old luggage, bikes, tax papers and other items you've been storing much too long. This is a good time to make sure your trust, real estate documents, insurance, emergency information, investment and retirement accounts are up to date.

Q: Our son and daughter-in-law are going on a four-month overseas assignment. They have asked us to take over the responsibility of our grandchildren in our home. The children are 8 and 11. We have agreed, but we are concerned about the details, especially their schooling, and switching from being grandparents to parents for the short term. Any ideas?

A: What a wonderful opportunity to strengthen the bonds with your grandchildren. At their ages the kids should be adaptable to your lifestyle and willing to cooperate. Establish an early routine so they understand you have become their temporary parents. Encouragement and one-on-one communication is a good way to handle them.

Upon their arrival, make a list of the way their new lifestyle routine will work and what you expect of them. It won't be the same as with their parents. Yet you will be helping them with schoolwork, attending teacher conferences, scheduling after-school activities and playtime with friends. Make sure you contact information for their doctors, check- up dates, health insurance cards and a notarized, short-term power of attorney in case of emergency. If there are family pets, make sure you have the vet's address and phone.

If you do not have access to e-mail, now is the time to get it. E-mail opens up the opportunity to maintain ongoing contact between your children and grandchildren. On a recent cruise this was proven to us when we learned many Russian ship employees communicated with their families on a daily basis. Modern technology has created an ideal method of communication, and hopefully you are already using it!

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