

# Top 10 Ways to Start Downsizing

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## 10. Start Early

It's never too early to begin the downsizing process. Three areas you can tackle right away are linen closets, coat closets, and desks.

## 9. Gift Away

Since your new home will not be able to "hold" all of your belongings, it's time to "gift" some of your most treasured items to special people in your life. For example, maybe a neighbor could use your lawn tools.

## 8. Books and More Books

We know it's difficult to let go of books. If you haven't read them in a while, consider donating them to your local library, senior center, or used bookstore. Books take up a lot of space and are heavy to move. Remember, some books have significant value so contact a local book dealer or check the resale value on [www.bookscooter.com](http://www.bookscooter.com) before donating or gifting them.

## 7. Use It Up!

When preparing for a move, it's a good idea to take inventory of the foods in your home and make a simple plan to use it BEFORE your move. Inventorying your pantry will save time packing up the food and save on your grocery bill during the process. This is an excellent time to use up those ingredients or take a trip to the local food pantry – two great options are The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina and PORCH, a hunger relief organization.

## 6. Recycle Toxins

Create a box or two for household, yard, and automotive cleaning products, as well as paint. They are considered hazardous and correct disposal is essential. Visit [Earth911.org](http://Earth911.org) for details on hazardous waste collection through your county.

## 5. Preserve the Memories

Life Storying, a process of documenting your life through words and photos, has become very popular. We often believe "things" are what should be passed down to our loved ones when they simply just want the memories attached to those things. Life Storying is a way of passing down memories and stories to family and friends.

## 4. Consider Free-cycling

The goal of free-cycling is to promote reuse and recycling to keep the good stuff out of landfills. Find a free-cycling group near you by visiting <https://www.freecycle.org/>.

## 3. Look for Duplicates

Through the years, we all accumulate duplicate appliances, tools, kitchenware, and office goods. When you move, those duplicates will take up quite a bit of space. Now is the perfect time to consider donating or selling these items.

## 2. Does It Have a Place?

Like my mom always says, "A place for everything and everything in its place." This adage is very true when you are considering what to get rid of and what to keep. If you know that your new space will not have a "spot" for specific items in your current home, then it is time to consider how to let go of them BEFORE you incur the expense of storing or moving them.

## 1. The "Maybe's" Can Go

More often than not, when you're preparing to downsize, you have a BIG maybe pile of items that you haven't decided on – if you haven't used those "maybes" in a while, then those are an ideal place to start letting go.

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# 10 Items to NOT Get Rid of When Downsizing

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## 1. Important Documents

Purging paper and old files is very important when downsizing but filing and labeling essential documents that should be kept are equally important. Here is a list of documents that should NOT be purged: birth and death records, marriage licenses, divorce decrees, social security cards, pension plan documents, medical records, insurance policies, passports, wills, trusts, power of attorney documents, property deeds, investment records, education records, diplomas, military service records, vehicle titles and seven years of tax records.

## 2. Photograph Digitization

Do you have boxes of photographs from years ago sitting in your attic or basement? Sorting and organizing pictures can be one of those projects that just never gets done. Digitizing them is an excellent way to preserve them from the elements while saving precious storage.

## 3. Sentimental Items

A lock of hair from your child's birth, a medal won in a competition, a concert ticket stub, or an album that brings back specific memories - these are all sentimental items that cannot be replaced. Carefully consider whether or not to keep these items.

## 4. Emergency Supplies

If you have a battery-operated radio, landline phone, batteries, flashlight and first aid kit - keep these for your move. If you don't have emergency supplies, this is the time to get them.

## 5. Unexpired Medication and Toiletries

Medication and toiletries are expensive to replace and essential. When sorting through medicine cabinets, pantries, and linens closets, keep an eye out for expiration dates on these items. All medications taken on a daily basis should be left out of packing until the day of or in an overnight bag.

## 6. Treasured Collections

Collecting certain things can be very enjoyable when you have the space for them, but when you're downsizing, we recommend you select your favorite few. Whether you collect tea sets or dolls, it's better to display and enjoy a few of them than to have them all boxed away in storage.

## 7. Family Heirlooms

Which ones do you truly love and value? These are the ones to keep and take with you to your new home. You can consider gifting or donating the remaining items.

## 8. Fine Jewelry in the Original Box

Having a piece of jewelry in its original box can add value when reselling it and maintains the condition of the article. Choose which jewelry pieces you would like to keep. For other pieces, there are jewelry experts that can help you determine the value.

## 9. Electronics

It is critical to wipe out all of your personal information before getting rid of any electronics. There are technology companies that can do this for you if you need help. The data on these devices may contain passwords, banking information and social security numbers, so ensure the data has been deleted prior to disposal.

## 10. Storage Containers

When moving, you often don't know how many storage containers you may need or want in your new space, so it's best to hang on to those until after you've moved. Once you're settled, it may be time to get rid of some containers. These items are easy to donate.

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