



THE ABCS OF DOWNSIZING TO SENIOR LIVING

A practical and supportive guide from PMMA (Presbyterian Manors of Mid-America®)



PMMA

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A FRESH START, SIMPLIFIED

Moving to a smaller space or a senior living community is a significant life transition, but it can also be an opportunity for a fresh, simplified lifestyle. At PMMA®, we understand that downsizing can feel overwhelming, both emotionally and logistically. Letting go of a longtime home is never easy—it holds memories, milestones, and meaning. That's why we're here to walk beside you through each step, offering compassionate guidance and support as you make this important move. We've created this guide to help you navigate the process with confidence, reduce stress, and embrace the next exciting chapter of your life.

This step-by-step resource will walk you through the key benefits of downsizing, practical strategies for decluttering, and essential tips to ensure a smooth transition into your new home.



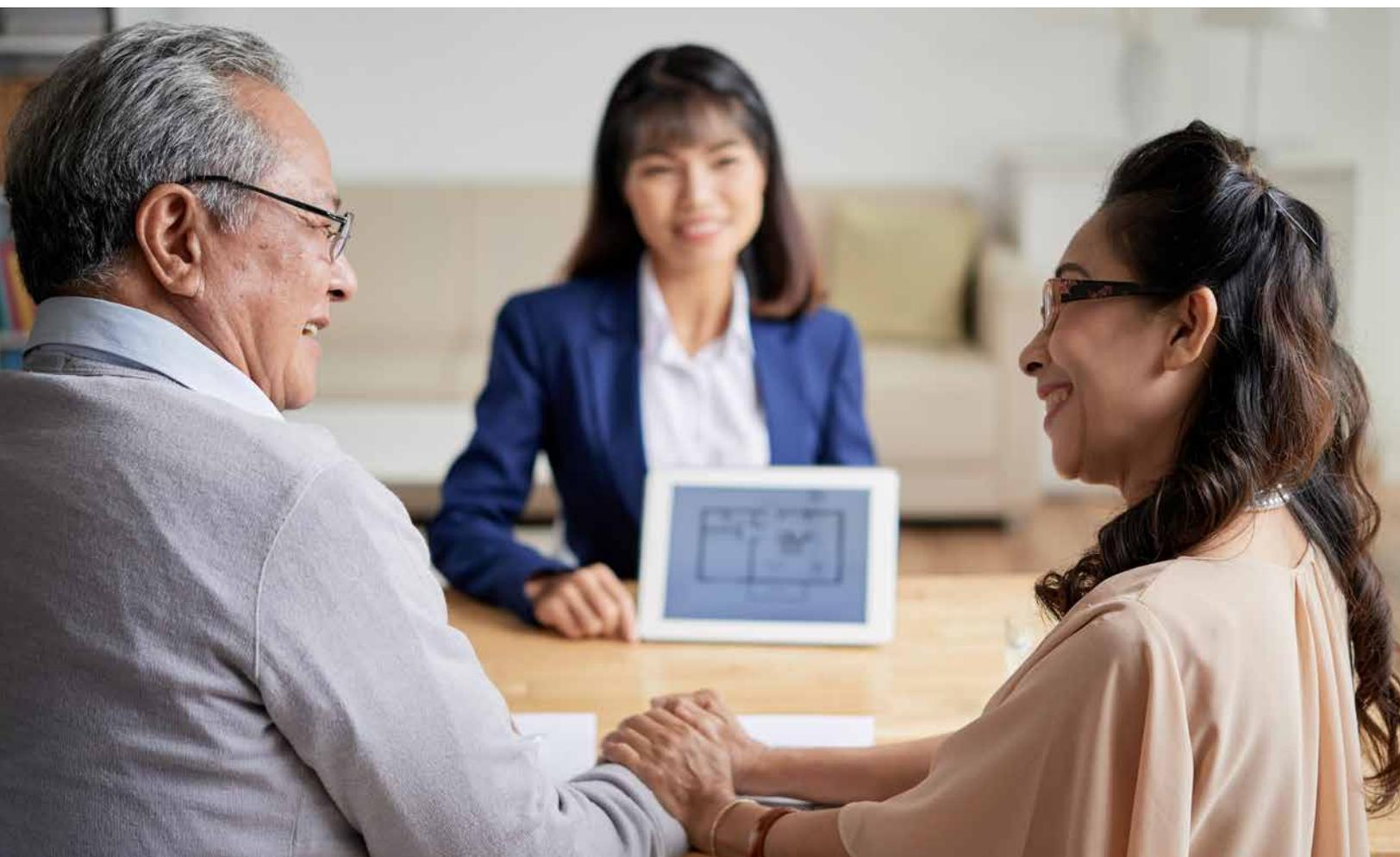
THE ABCS OF DOWNSIZING

Use this easy A-to-Z guide to break the process into manageable steps.

- **A – Assess Your Needs.** Consider what you truly need and use daily. Will it fit in your new space? Does it bring you joy?
- **B – Begin Early.** Start small—one room or category at a time—to avoid last-minute stress.
- **C – Create a Plan.** Set a timeline and create a list of tasks to stay organized and on track.
- **D – Donate.** Share meaningful items with family, friends, or charities.
- **E – Enlist Help.** Seek support from family, friends, or professionals who specialize in senior moves.
- **F – Focus on the Future.** Let go of items that no longer serve you and embrace the benefits of your new home.
- **G – Get Rid of Duplicates.** You likely don't need multiple sets of dishes, towels, or kitchen tools.
- **H – Hold onto Memories, Not Things.** Consider digitizing old photos or keeping just a few treasured keepsakes.
- **I – Invest in Space-Saving Solutions.** Multi-purpose furniture and smart storage can make a smaller space feel bigger.
- **J – Junk Removal Services.** Schedule a pickup for bulk items you no longer need.
- **K – Keep What You Love.** If something makes you happy and fits in your new space, it's worth keeping.
- **L – Label Everything.** Clearly mark boxes for easy unpacking.
- **M – Measure Twice.** Ensure large furniture will fit in your new home before you move it.



- **N – Notify Important Contacts.** Update your address with the post office, banks, and healthcare providers.
- **O – Organize by Category.** Sorting items into “keep,” “donate,” “sell,” and “discard” makes decisions easier.
- **P – Prioritize Essentials.** Pack a “first-day” box with toiletries, medications, and important documents.
- **Q – Quick Decisions.** Don’t linger too long on any one item—trust your instincts.
- **R – Recycle Responsibly.** Old electronics, paperwork, and furniture can often be recycled.
- **S – Seek Professional Guidance.** Real estate agents, move managers, and senior living advisors can be great resources.
- **T – Take Breaks.** Downsizing can be emotional—pace yourself.
- **U – Utilize a Floor Plan.** Knowing your new space’s layout helps determine what will fit.
- **V – Visualize Your New Home.** Imagine how you want your new space to feel and function.
- **W – Work in Stages.** Declutter one category or room at a time to avoid burnout.
- **X – X-Out Clutter.** Be firm about eliminating non-essential items.
- **Y – Yard Sale or Online Selling.** Make extra cash by selling valuable but unnecessary items like lawn mowers and washing machines.
- **Z – Zero Regrets.** Moving forward with less “stuff” allows for more freedom and new opportunities.





STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO DOWNSIZING SUCCESS

1. Declutter with Purpose

- Start with easier areas (like linens or tools) before tackling sentimental items.
- Consider a one-year rule: If you haven't worn it, read it, or used it in a year, you likely don't need so let it go.

2. Make Confident Decisions

- Label boxes and bags clearly: "Keep," "Donate," "Sell," "Discard."
- Be realistic about what fits in your new space.
- Keep items that bring comfort and joy—let go of excess.

3. Ask for Help When Needed

- Family members, friends, or professionals can make the process easier.
- PMMA offers resources to assist you in your transition.

4. Create a Timeline

- Work backward from your move-in date to set milestones.
- Give yourself enough time to downsize gradually.

5. Plan for the Move

- Measure furniture and storage space to ensure a good fit.
- Pack an "essentials" box with medications, important documents, and daily necessities.

6. Settle into Your New Home with Ease

- Unpack essentials first to feel comfortable right away.
- Take your time making your new space feel like home.

THE BENEFITS OF DOWNSIZING

Moving to a smaller home or a senior living community offers many advantages, helping you simplify your life while maintaining independence and peace of mind.

Less Maintenance

One of the most immediate benefits of downsizing and moving to senior living is the reduction in household upkeep. A smaller home or apartment in a senior living community means:

- No more worrying about roof repairs, plumbing issues, or HVAC maintenance.
- Less space to clean, making tidying up faster and easier.
- No need for seasonal outdoor work such as mowing the lawn, raking leaves, or shoveling snow.

By eliminating these responsibilities, you can focus on enjoying your time rather than spending it on maintaining your home.



More Organization

A well-planned, downsized space promotes an uncluttered and stress-free environment. With fewer items, it's easier to keep track of what you own, reducing frustration when searching for things. Don't forget about custom storage solutions, such as multi-purpose furniture or built-in shelving, that can make organization seamless even in smaller spaces.

Downsizing forces you to prioritize what's truly important, leaving you with only the items that serve a purpose or bring joy. An organized home can bring a sense of calm, helping you enjoy daily activities with ease.

Increased Safety

Cluttered spaces, excess furniture, and large, multi-level homes can pose safety risks. Downsizing can help create a safer living environment by:

- Removing trip hazards such as throw rugs, electrical cords, or cluttered walkways.
- Ensuring all living areas are easily accessible without the need for stairs.
- Providing senior-friendly design features such as grab bars, well-lit hallways, and step-free showers.
- Reducing the risk of injury from lifting, bending, or carrying heavy objects.

By transitioning to a well-designed living space, you can significantly lower the risk of falls and accidents, providing peace of mind for you and your loved ones.



More Time for What You Love

Downsizing allows you to shift your focus from home upkeep to personal fulfillment.

After downsizing to senior living, you have the ability to spend more time with family and friends without worrying about home-related tasks. You'll now have the time to explore new and old hobbies such as painting, gardening, or playing an instrument.

Every day you'll be able to take advantage of amenities at your community, such as fitness centers, walking paths, and on-site activities and events. Less time spent on chores and obligations means more time enjoying the things that matter most.

You'll really heave a sigh of relief when you realize you will be able to travel for days, weeks or months at a time, with ease, knowing your home is secure and not behind on maintenance.

Built-in Community

One of the most rewarding aspects of transitioning to a PMMA senior living community is the opportunity to be part of a welcoming and engaging environment.

Residents benefit from:

- Regularly scheduled social activities, such as movie nights, ice cream socials, and bridge groups.
- Access to wellness programs, including exercise classes and walking groups.
- Spiritual enrichment opportunities through Bible studies and worship services.
- Organized day trips and cultural events to keep life interesting and fulfilling.
- On-site dining, transportation, and security services for added comfort and convenience.

Downsizing to senior living is more than just moving to a smaller space—it's an opportunity to embrace a lifestyle that offers connection, engagement, and peace of mind.



TRUSTED DOWNSIZING RESOURCES

Downsizing doesn't have to be overwhelming. There are professionals who specialize in making the process easier, ensuring a smooth transition to your next home.

Senior Move Managers

These professionals specialize in assisting older adults with every aspect of a move, from sorting and packing to coordinating logistics. Senior move managers can:

- Help create a customized downsizing plan.
- Assist with decluttering and deciding what to keep, donate, or sell.
- Coordinate packing, moving, and unpacking services.
- Arrange for furniture placement in your new home based on floor plans.

Senior move managers provide emotional and logistical support to make the process stress-free.

Real Estate Agents Specializing in Seniors

Selling a long-time home can be an emotional and complex process. A Senior Real Estate Specialist (SRES) holds a special designation from the National Association of Realtors, who are able to meet the needs of older adults selling, buying, or relocating properties. An SRES can:

- Provide insight into market trends to help you sell at the right time.
- Offer guidance on preparing and pricing your home for sale.
- Assist in finding the right senior living community.
- Handle the negotiation and paperwork to streamline the process.



CHECKLIST FOR A SMOOTH MOVE

Staying organized is key to a stress-free downsizing experience. Follow this checklist to ensure everything goes smoothly:

Preparing to Downsize

- Start early—give yourself several months to go through belongings.
- Make a list of must-keep items and measure them for your new space.
- Take photos of sentimental items before letting them go.
- Schedule appointments with a senior move manager, estate sale specialist, or real estate agent if needed.

Decluttering and Organizing

- Work room by room, starting with storage areas such as attics, basements, and garages.
- Use the “Keep, Donate, Sell, or Discard” method for sorting items.
- Reduce duplicates—keep only one set of dishes, linens, or cookware.
- Shred or securely store important documents.
- Arrange for donation pickups for large furniture or bulk items.

Packing and Moving Logistics

- Gather boxes, packing tape, and labels early.
- Label all boxes clearly by category and destination room.
- Pack a moving-day essentials box with medications, important documents, and a few days' worth of clothing.
- Confirm moving arrangements with hired movers or family helpers.
- Notify banks, utility companies, and medical providers of your new address.

Settling into Your New Home

- Unpack essentials first to make your space comfortable right away.
- Arrange furniture for easy mobility and accessibility.
- Set up safety features like nightlights and grab bars if needed.
- Explore your new community and participate in activities to meet neighbors.

By following this checklist, you can ensure a well-organized and positive transition into your new home.





Contact a PMMA Community Near You

Downsizing is an important step toward a simpler, more fulfilling lifestyle. Whether you are moving into independent living, assisted living, or memory care, PMMA's communities offer a supportive environment where you can thrive. If you have any questions about making a move, our team is here to help.

Visit presbyterianmanors.org/communities/ to find a location near you. Your new beginning is just a click away.



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