Managing the stress of moving

Moving is one life event that pretty much everyone goes through—usually more than once. Although it may



times, the prospect of moving can also be overwhelming.

Whether moving down the street, across the country or across the globe, moving adds additional demands on time and energy that can easily upset the already delicate balance of life. The key to success is to stay focused, get organized and take one step at a time. So let's get moving!

Tips and tools you can use

Approach the move like any major project. Start a file, divide the move into stages, draw up a schedule and check off each step as it is achieved. Although you may want to keep a file on your computer, hard copies can be a valuable way to keep track of information and keep it at hand. Plus, tear sheets with information about suppliers or ideas for your new home can be very helpful. Here are some great tips to help you get going:

What are you moving?

First, go through your home and get rid of all clutter and junk. Here are a few ideas to make it easier and more enjoyable:

- Get your children involved. Let them keep some favourite toys or books from younger days for sentiment's sake, but don't be swayed into keeping everything!
- Hold a garage sale or give clothes and appliances to charities or resale outlets.
- Throw out what you can't sell or give away. Remember that it costs money to move every item—so don't move junk!

Booking the move

Decide whether you are going to hire a moving service or do it yourself with a hired van and the help of friends. Budget restrictions may make this decision for you. Once you know what method you would like to use:

- Get two or three estimates from moving companies. Walk through the house with each company representative, being careful to point out any items that are staying.
- Ask about delicate items and additional insurance that may be required for them.
- Ask what the movers will not move. Some companies have restrictions on moving large, sensitive items, such as pianos, flammable items such as Barbeque tanks and temperature sensitive items such as plants and aquariums.
- Be clear about how much packing and unpacking the mover will do and how much you will do yourself.
- Book your moving date with the moving company or a rental truck service.
- Remember that costs are often higher at the start and end of each month, so avoid these times if possible.

Get organized

Before the move even begins it will be helpful to have a few plans laid, such as:

- Decide how you will move items that the movers won't take.
- Make arrangements for pets to be taken care of elsewhere or taken early on moving day to a quiet room in the new home where they will not be disturbed.
- If you have very young children, arrange for babysitting.
- Send out curtains, loose rugs, etc. to be cleaned and arrange for them to be delivered to your new home.
- Don't pay for food to be moved. Use up freezer food and cut back on shopping.
- Send change-of-address notifications to suppliers and friends. Arrange for mail re-delivery through the post office. Arrange for medical, dental and vet records to be transferred.
- Arrange for the address on your driver’s license to change on your moving date.

Start packing

Some movers will do packing for you, but if you are in control of the packing:

- Number each box on several sides, and keep a list of the numbers and their contents.
- Use towels, linens and sweaters to wrap delicate items. When these are used up, wrap breakables in paper. Pad the bottom of each box.
- Keep a few boxes for last minute items such as bed linen from the previous night, toiletries, overnight clothes, kettle and coffee maker, cleaning items etc.
- Make sure your last minute boxes are last on the van and first to be unloaded.

Moving day

The stress of the big day can be minimized with some preparations, including:

- A moving day "survival kit" is essential. It should include toiletries, medications, pens and paper, toilet paper, garbage bags, a flashlight, light bulbs, dishwashing liquid, a can opener, a couple of screwdrivers, overnight clothes and tea or coffee.
- Keep a "last-on/first-off" box with bed-linen and towels for your first night, a change of clothes; basic cleaning materials, a local telephone book and anything else you will likely need in the first day or so in your new home.
- Walk around your old home to check that nothing has been left.
- Make sure you are at your new home when the movers arrive.
- Put a bottle of wine or champagne in your new fridge. When the movers have gone, celebrate!

Moving can be one of the most stressful changes we go through in life, since it involves a complete upheaval and examination of everything accumulated in our lives. It can also be a great time to take stock of what is important, de-clutter and start fresh. The tips above should help to minimize the stress of moving through planning and organization.